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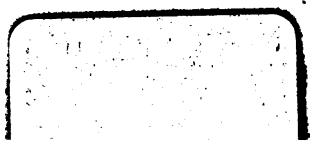
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THE
LIFE
OF
PROFESSOR GELLERT.

THE
LIFE
OF
PROFESSOR GELLERT;
WITH A
COURSE OF MORAL LESSONS,
DELIVERED BY HIM
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF LEIPSICK;

TAKEN FROM A FRENCH TRANSLATION OF THE
ORIGINAL GERMAN:

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By **Mrs DOUGLAS,**

OF
EDNAM HOUSE

VOL. I.

KELSO:

PRINTED BY ALEX. BALLANTYNE,
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1805.

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TO
MR WILLIAM OSMUND HAMMOND,
ELDEST SON OF
WILLIAM HAMMOND, ESQUIRE,
OF ST ALBAN'S COURT,
KENT.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

THE original motives of my translating the *Life and Moral Lessons of GELLERT* are detailed in the Preface I have prefixed to the book ; my dedication of it to you arises from the tender interest I take in your welfare, which extends far beyond the limits of a fleeting life, which every moment may terminate.

That I earnestly wish you all the blessings this life can bestow, is certain ; and, as far as human foresight can perceive, you have every prospect of possessing an ample share of them. Enjoy them, my child, with cheerfulness and gratitude, remembering not to lose sight of the Giver in the gift, but ever to feel and to acknowledge, that every situation, and every event of our lives, is directed by an Almighty and All-gracious Power, who, whether prosperity or adversity be our lot in this life, will, if it be not our own fault, make them conducive to our permanent felicity in another, which is to last for ever. Be virtuous,

my dear boy, *in Religious Principles*; be virtuous, and everlasting happiness shall be your portion.

This book, which I dedicate to you as an offering of tender and sincere affection, is calculated to enforce a principle too often forgotten even amongst people apparently good and religious, viz. That an *honourable* man, a *benevolent* man, a *virtuous* man, cannot from these qualities derive any hope of the favour of God, unless he builds them on the firm basis of religious reverence to the supreme Being, and obedience to his laws, whose merits alone can avail us to salvation, in conjunction with our best endeavours to obey his precepts; on which condition he has promised us the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to aid our weakness, and purify our hearts.

Too many seem to think religion confined to frequenting church, repeating prayers in private, and reading a certain portion of the scriptures daily. These are excellent instruments of religion, but no more constitute religion than the hand or the head completes the man. Every thing, without exception, be it pleasure, study, business, the daily duties and civilities of society, all should be directed by religious principle. You will find this system so clearly and persuasively illustrated in the author I am introducing to your acquaintance, that it would be waste of time for me to lessen the force of his arguments by stating them in any words of mine. Read these lessons frequently, my dear child, and study them with the attention they deserve. Let them help to guard your youth in the world you are entered into; for I fear a great school

is but too exact an epitome of the world, its errors, vices, and temptations. Let the affecting addresses of GELLERT to his disciples touch your own heart, and receive his excellent book from me as a testimony of my affection. At every period, and in every circumstance of your future life, you may find in this book useful advice and excellent examples ; and, perhaps, years after she who presents it to your attention, can no longer assure you of the regard she bears you, you may read with interest and advantage the memorial of her earnest wishes for your eternal welfare.

To be useful, was my motive for translating GELLERT's Life and Lessons ; in doing it, my understanding and my conscience were gratified. It remains with you to make it procure me the delightful gratifications of the heart, for mine will glow with tender joy if I can hope this offering of affection may help to direct you in the paths of religion, and save you from the snares of vice. That all good may attend you, that you may be a blessing to your parents, and to all your family ; that you may discharge every duty as it arises in life on Christian principles ; and, when this life terminates, that you may exchange it for everlasting bliss, is the heartfelt prayer of

YOUR MOST TRULY SINCERE FRIEND,

AND IN HEART, THOUGH NOT BY BLOOD,

YOUR AFFECTIONATE GRANDMOTHER,

M. DOUGLAS.

*Ednam-House, }
Jan. 1st, 1805. }*

PREFACE.

THOUGH well aware that my motives for translating and publishing the Life and Moral Lessons of Professor GELLERT can not be any way important or interesting to the public, I cannot refrain from saying, that a wish to employ, in some useful manner, the many hours of leisure I derive from delicate health, and consequent peculiar habits of life, first led me to this undertaking. Disqualified by health and habit for those active domestic duties which hold the first rank in female character; unable to exert that personal active benevolence in all its various branches, which so honourably distinguishes many of my sex; from weak health and choice, passing all my morning hours alone, and fully impressed with a conviction that life is not given us to be spent in occupations merely calculated to wear away time, without any farther aim, my thoughts naturally turned to consider in what way I might find for myself some employment, by which I could hope to make some of my hours beneficial to others, and thereby discharge,

in some fort, and according to my ability, the duty of not dragging on a useless existence. With this impression on my mind I met with the moral lessons of Professor GELLERT, translated into French from the German. The excellent principles contained in these lessons, wherein it is taught, without severity or enthusiasm, that every action of life, whether small or great, must have religion for its basis, if we wish to live the life, and die the death, of Christians, induced me (as I found the book was very little known in England, and I believe never translated into our language) to think that I could not find an employment by which I should have a fairer prospect of doing something useful, than by enabling the English reader to profit by the excellent moral lessons of GELLERT.

Did I attach any vanity to this undertaking, (which I should suppose can never be the case with a mere translator), I might be still more impressed than I am with a sense of the disadvantages of translating from a translation. Of the German language I am wholly ignorant; but I suspect that the French translator has sometimes rendered GELLERT's sense very imperfectly. As much as I could I have endeavoured to obviate this, and now send it to the press, not with indifference as to its

success, as I earnestly wish it may be much read, in the hope that those who read it, particularly young people, may imbibe the excellent principles therein contained, and learn from it above all, to consider that no actions in life are indifferent to beings endeavouring to attain to a blessed eternity !

GELLERT's Life I have translated partly from an account of him prefixed to the French translation of his moral lessons, and partly from a French translation of it by the late Madame de la Fitz, and placed at the head of a collection of his letters, translated from the German by her, and from circumstances, better known in England than his moral lessons, though not so extensively as they deserve.

The two essays, one on religion, the other on devotion, were also translated by Madame de la Fitz, who inserted them in the collection of her translation of his letters.

May the book prove useful, and my end will be answered !

THE
LIFE OF GELLERT.

CHRISTIAN F. GELLERT was born at Haynichen, in Saxony, in 1715. His venerable Father, Christian Gellert, second Minister in the place, fulfilled the duties of his charge, during fifty years, with exemplary zeal and fidelity, and died Dean at the age of 75, after having employed his slender revenue, directed by a prudent economy, in the education of thirteen children. His wife, whose maiden name was Schutz, was an useful companion to him, and a most respectable mother to his children, on whose young hearts she impressed, with the utmost attention, the principles and sentiments of a sincere piety, which she succeeded in rendering amiable in their eyes, both by the natural influence of maternal instruction, and by the power of example. Her gentleness, her benevolence, the active goodness of her heart, have consecrated her memory in the

place where she lived. Her old age was free from anxiety. She had the comfort of seeing her three eldest sons employed in posts such as might be desired by a mother, ever moderate, even in the wishes she formed for her children. Her death happened soon after she completed her eightieth year, and she quitted the world with a calm and contented mind. Frederick, her eldest son, was principal Commissary of the Posts in Saxony, and survived only one month, the death of his second brother, from the grief occasioned by his loss. The youngest son of Madame Gellert, Inspector of the Mines at Freiberg, still does useful service to his country, by his deep and extensive knowledge in metallurgy. Christian Furchtegott*, her third son, had the happiness of finding amongst his friends, a generous man, who bestowed on the old age of his mother the benefaction originally intended for him; which son afforded an example, that those born in the bosom of a virtuous mediocrity, as frequently contribute to the good of society, as those who are plentifully endowed with the gifts of fortune; and thus became the reward of his mother's piety.

The following extracts from Gellert's letters, written on his birth-day, seem to deserve a place here; one, expressive of his tender affection for his mother, and descriptive of her appearance and character;

* Fear God.

the other, written to Baron Craussen, his mother's benefactor, announcing her death.

“ I am now under two Elms, planted by my
 “ Father, in the year of my birth, that we might grow
 “ together. O! how many pure and delightful sentiments do I experience, under these beneficent
 “ trees, which seem, this day, to throw a broader
 “ shade over me, and embalm me in a softer fragrance, from its being my birth-day. I salute you,
 “ beloved trees, and ye smiling bowers, planted
 “ by my own hands! May the son of my best
 “ friend repose some day under your shade, and
 “ under you, drop the tender tear of recollection
 “ over the memory of his father and of me! Ah
 “ Madam, could you see me at this moment, seated
 “ under my contemporaries, under my beloved
 “ Elms. Here it was that, crowned with flowers,
 “ I formerly tasted the joys of childhood, then the
 “ pleasures of youth; and here it is, that I come,
 “ in riper years, to forget the troubles of life, and
 “ enjoy over again the pleasures of early days.

“ As a traveller, who, from the summit of a mountain, measures with his eye, the road he has traversed, so I direct my mind to wander over the entire space of my life, from my thirtieth, to the first
 “ year of my infancy. Here I recollect a happy
 “ scene; there a scene of melancholy. Here I
 “ recollect having formed a good design, and I rest

“ on it with pleasure ; there a folly, a false step, pre-
 “ sents itself, there some other error. O! how quick-
 “ ly I withdraw my mind from the recollection. I
 “ reckon my days of health and calm enjoyment, and
 “ raise a thankful eye to God. I reckon my days of
 “ suffering and melancholy, and rejoice that they
 “ are passed. By turns I consider myself as a
 “ Student, an Author, a Friend, a Lover, as patro-
 “ nized or—————here is a blank—fortune
 “ never permitted me to perform the proud part of
 “ a Patron. It is true, I have assisted some of my
 “ friends to obtain employments, but they deserved
 “ them, and were my superiors in capacity ; I can-
 “ not, therefore, entirely claim to myself the cha-
 “ racter of Patron. At this moment I see my mo-
 “ ther advancing towards me : but no, she sees I am
 “ writing and gently makes her escape, for fear of
 “ interrupting me. Excellent mother ! I shall pre-
 “ sently fetch her. I am to give her a dinner to-
 “ day, and during the repast, I shall never be tired
 “ of contemplating her white hair, her venerable
 “ countenance, on which is so sweetly impressed
 “ piety and calm content. *Come, O my mother ! Place*
 “ *thyself by the side of thy son, who will read with de-*
 “ *light the tender expression of thy looks, and congratu-*
 “ *late himself on having received his life from thee.* My
 “ sister was lately reading something from my works
 “ to my mother. She listened all the time with a

“ smile. At length, ‘ *that is well expressed,*’ said
 “ she, ‘ *who can have told him all these things ?*’
 “ *It is he himself, however, who has written that :*
 “ *in truth, I do feel a real pleasure in hearing him prai-*
 “ *sed. I hope it is sincerely that people praise him. I*
 “ *observe he sometimes speaks of love in his writings, and*
 “ *nevertheless to see him, one would suppose him indiffer-*
 “ *ent to all women. It is, however, possible to love with*
 “ *entire virtue and honour. He was always virtuous*
 “ *and of a sweet and placid disposition. Believe me,*
 “ *Madam, these unaffected praises, given me by*
 “ *my mother, flatter me more than I could be flat-*
 “ *tered by those of posterity. How happy am I to*
 “ *owe my being to her ! But she draws near, doubt-*
 “ *less she has been praying for her son. If you, my*
 “ *friend, were now with us, I should never through-*
 “ *out my life experience a happier day than this.*”

The following is the letter addressed by Gellert
 to Mons le Baron de Crausen, announcing his mo-
 ther’s death.

“ As no one deserved more of my mother than
 “ you, my generous friend, you are the person I
 “ ought, before every other, to inform, that she has
 “ just terminated her career of life. I received
 “ this intelligence some hours ago, and have hardly
 “ given vent, by my filial tears, to my first emotion
 “ of grief and tenderness, when my afflicted heart
 “ pours its sorrows into your bosom, and seeks to

“ converse with you on the only object which fills
 “ it at present. On the 23d of this month, my mo-
 “ ther ceased to live, and her death, like her life,
 “ was pious and peaceful. I was not present at this
 “ affecting scene ; but I know for certain, that you
 “ and I were the objects of her latest benedictions.
 “ In the name of this blessed departed, I return you
 “ thanks for the benefactions which have comforted
 “ and sweetened her old age, and which you have so
 “ generously bestowed on her during so many years.
 “ May God prolong your life to my mother’s age
 “ (she died at fourscore); and grant that your
 “ death may be like hers ; for it was with perfect se-
 “ renity and joy, that she beheld the approaches of
 “ her last sleep, and her last words were acts of
 “ praise and thanksgiving.

“ It always appeared inconceivable to her, that
 “ a stranger should show himself so liberal, and con-
 “ tinue to her, for so long a time, the same bene-
 “ faction, without her or her son having done any
 “ thing on their parts to deserve it. Will posterity
 “ be less at a loss to comprehend this, should it come
 “ to its knowledge ; that a nobleman, a man of let-
 “ ters, who inhabited a different country from mine,
 “ and whose name was unknown to me, till that mo-
 “ ment, offered me an annual pension, in the most
 “ delicate and generous manner, and that, on my
 “ refusal to accept it, he made it over to my mo-

“ther, whom he knew only by my letters? I al-
 “ways felt a singular tenderness for this beloved
 “mother, and thus shall I, whilst I live, love and
 “honour her benefactor. But these sentiments, as
 “well as those of filial love, are duties; therefore,
 “however deep my gratitude, I shall ever be your
 “debtor. Yes, my excellent friend, I feel, that
 “I can never acquit myself towards you.”

Leipsick, January 25, 1759.

The public schools in the small towns of Saxony,
 are so established, that the first principles of religion,
 and the first elements of the learned languages, are
 taught at the same time: instructions ever valuable,
 but generally too much confined. The very small
 salaries given to the masters, hardly suffice to set them
 above poverty, and their embarrassed situations,
 added to the want of more favourable prospects, are
 obstacles to the exertion of the talents they may pos-
 sess. In one of these public schools, Gellert received
 his first instructions. It may well be supposed, that
 these assisted but little in the developement of the
 distinctive qualities of his heart and understanding.
 He learnt there, according to the usual uniform me-
 thod, frequently so harsh and disagreeable, all that
 was there taught to youth; and, moreover, he was
 there formed to patience and submission, qualities so
 necessary in the world, for supporting various trou-
 bles without murmuring.

The portion of genius allotted by nature, even to those whom she favours most, is at first but a spark, and we feel, that under the influence of Gellert's first education, this spark could not emit as much splendour as shone on the infancy of Pope. He always, however, recollected with gratitude the instructions given him by his first master. He often mentioned with praise, a young scholar whom his father had chosen to give him private instructions, and prepare him for the public lessons of the great schools. He took kindly of this young man, his having constantly required of him to perform for himself certain offices, often left to be discharged by servants, when circumstances permit, and which we easily accustom ourselves to consider as wants, but which Gellert always knew how to do without, notwithstanding the habitual weakness of his constitution. He used to recollect with pleasure, that, at eight years old, he had often been employed by his parents in many little domestic cares, which had no relation to his studies, "at least," says he, in some fragments of memoirs concerning his life, which were found amongst his papers, "at least, at that time I learnt a very important science, I learnt to obey." With such an education, the progress of the understanding cannot be very rapid, but an early habit is attained of being usefully employed. At eleven years old, he was made to copy a multi-

trade of documents, contracts and judicial acts; and he used jokingly to say, that his native town possessed, amongst its contracts and mercantile books, more works of his, than he should ever compose for the public, in the whole course of his life. "This kind of occupation," said he, "taught me to give a somewhat of law turn to the stile of my letters, and when I wrote to my father to ask for a coat, it was in the language of a lawyer who defends his rights from attack."

It would be amusing to trace out and follow the first developements of Gellert's poetical talents. We know at least, that his father cultivated them, and that this respectable man, thought much too properly to constrain the talents and inclinations of his children.

The eldest brother of Gellert discovered also a taste for poetry, and boasted in joke of having given lessons in it to his brother. This instructor must have been very young, for his scholar manifested his poetical talents in his thirteenth year.

His first attempt was a poem on his father's birthday.

The habitation of this good man, was an old building, supported by fourteen or fifteen props, and his children and grand-children amounted to precisely the same number. This similitude furnished the young man with the idea of considering the children and

grand-children, as so many props of their father's age, and of making them each speak in their turns. "This poem," said he, "must have had some merit, since many people have known it by heart, and preferred it, if I am not mistaken, to my other works." This first attempt was followed by many others; he himself regretted having consigned them to the flames; because they might have served as examples how long natural talents may remain unfruitful, or even be sometimes annihilated; without the knowledge of rules and the assistance of good models. When the imagination in its first flight, takes a false direction, it is very difficult to bring it back to the sense of what is just and beautiful. Gellert often doubted whether he could have attained to the forming his taste, without the assistance of a society of friends experienced in the art of sound criticism, whom he had the happiness to meet with at Leipzick, in his second journey thither. He certainly judged too modestly of himself, and thought that he ought to attribute to his friends a service, for which they were far from thinking him indebted to them; his earliest compositions discover many features and beauties peculiar to himself, and Gellert would have had taste independently of his friends. It is not, however, the less true, that young authors, sufficiently attached to each other reciprocally,

cally to examine their works, cannot but find such a mode of criticism greatly to their advantage.

Amongst the institutions destined to prepare youth for the acquisition of useful and profound knowledge, none are preferable to the schools established by the Princes of Saxony in their territories. They are all directed to this end. The hours of instruction, those which the scholars employ in preparing fresh lessons, in going over again what they have already learnt, or in exercising themselves in making essays in composition, succeed one another in the wisest order; the young people have so little time to lose in idleness and seducing pleasures, that, if the masters fulfil their duties, these seminaries must furnish the universities with subjects perfectly well trained to study. At Meissen, where one of these schools was situated, Gellert might have become acquainted, together with the Greek and Roman languages, with those lasting models of eloquence, of poetry and of good taste, which they have left us, in every species of literature; but a very bad method of explaining the antient authors was practised at that time, both in the schools and the universities of Germany. The scholars were made to translate the poets and the orators, word for word, as they did the historians; and without any pains being taken to point out to them what deserved particular attention. The students collected phrases together,

learnt them by heart, and were excited to bring them into themes which bore the pompous title of imitations; but he could not acquire more than a very imperfect knowledge of the beauties to be found in these authors, of the characters by which they are distinguished, and of what deserves to be admired in them, and imitated if possible.

Gellert, though he was well aware of the defects in his education, spoke always of his instructors at Meissen with gratitude, and applauded especially, the pains they had taken to form his heart, and instill into it good principles. His eyes, which habitually expressed a tender melancholy, were animated even to sparkling, whenever he recollected having lived at that school with Gartner and Rabener, whose tender and intimate friendship contributed so much afterwards to the happiness of his life.

The weakness of Gellert's constitution sometimes showed itself at Meissen, and from infancy his health appeared delicate; though mistaken attentions had not accustomed him to excessive indulgence, nor had he any reproaches to make to himself on this account.

He went to Leipstick in 1734 and after studying there four years, he was recalled to his home, because the expence of his maintenance at the university, became too heavy a charge for his father. Gellert would have much wished to continue his aca-

demical studies, but as became a dutiful son, he submitted to a necessity, which has often stopt hopeful genius in its career and prevented its ever attaining the goal. At his return he began to appear in the pulpit, but it was with much timidity ; for, being yet a student, he had ventured to speak in public, and his first attempt had not been fortunate.

This little particularity in his life, is not unworthy of being related here, as he has spoken of it in his memoirs, because it was one of the remote causes which turned him aside from his first vocation. " It was at the age of fifteen," said he " and in my native town, that I made the first essay of my eloquence. One of the citizens had requested me to be godfather to his child, which child died a few days after. I undertook his funeral sermon, though my father agreed rather unwillingly to my so doing. The child was to be buried at noon ; at eight in the morning I began to compose my discourse, which was not completed till very late, I lost what time remained in composing an epitaph, and had but one hour to fix what I had just written in my memory. However, I boldly entered the church and began my discourse with much solemnity, and attained nearly to the third sentence. Suddenly my ideas became confused, and the presumptuous orator found himself in a state of anxiety, from which it was difficult for him to recover. At length I had recourse to my

papers, written in form of a deed, on one large sheet. I unrolled it slowly before the eyes of my audience, who were as much disturbed as myself, I placed it in my hat and continued my discourse with tolerable boldness. It was supposed that grief had deprived me of memory ; it was being very indulgent ! However, this youthful precipitation cost me dear ; it has never been banished from my remembrance ; it has pursued me every time I mounted the pulpit ; and is the origin of that timidity, of which I have never been able wholly to divest myself. Ardent youth ! let my example teach thee to conduct thyself with more prudence. I presumed too much on myself, I was punished for it, and I frequently afterwards deplored my foolish temerity : Be wiser than I was !” This advice is useful in itself, and receives additional value from the heart whence it proceeded. Could Gellert have conquered his timidity, and had his health been better, his lungs stronger, and his memory more firm, we may judge, from some of his youthful attempts, that he might have acquired in Germany a distinguished rank amongst the pulpit orators. But he was far from having this idea of himself, “ Poor orator,” exclaimed he, “ I should need eight days to learn a sermon : why did not I rather copy deeds, or help the bell ringer to perform his office ? I should not have ruined my health, and if I had not done honour

to the pulpit, others would have fulfilled this vocation; with better success and more usefully." Thus with a great wish to please, and much endeavour to obtain the esteem of his fellow creatures, he frequently pushed his modesty so far as to be unjust to his talents and advantages.

As a sacred orator he would have been distinguished by a train of ideas peculiar to himself, by the clearness of his reasonings, by a chain at once ingenious and natural, and by an agreeable and easy elocution. He would doubtless have had that popularity, so much admired, even by those who are not aware of the difficulty of attaching an audience, by rendering himself intelligible to the multitude, by descending to their level, and adopting that style, which is useful to them, without becoming either dry or trivial. We may already see in his youthful sermons, that ease and those graces, which characterise the productions of his riper years; and as to the style, these differ from the others merely because, in his later works, he has been careful to give more length to his periods, and to turn them more oratorically. To confirm this opinion, we shall here transcribe some passages from these sermons: even the early attempts of Gellert are interesting.

At the beginning of a discourse on these words of Jesus Christ, "If any one does the will of him that sent me, he shall know whether my doctrine

“ is from God ; or whether I have spoken of myself,” our young orator describes, with animation, the levity with which we make our first steps in religion. “ We consider it,” says he, “ as a thing which it can do us no harm to admit, but which beyond this, has no influence on the common affairs of life. We do not precisely reject all the means of salvation ; but, at the same time, we take little trouble to seek them out ; we believe in the doctrine of Jesus from habit, from imitation, from indolence, that we may free ourselves, as soon as possible, from a work absolutely necessary to be performed, some time in our life, in order to be saved hereafter. We determine in an instant to believe in heaven, in hell, in eternal life and death, in God and in Jesus Christ ; to deliver ourselves at once from the important task of studying these truths and making our confession of faith. In one instant, we become faithful confessors of Christ, holy defenders of his faith, Apostles ; and even determine to suffer martyrdom if necessary. The conversion of St Paul, though an example of an extraordinary conversion, was not so sudden. He required to be enlightened, convinced, strengthened : all that is not, in these days, necessary. We walk towards heaven, as it were, in play ; the space of a moment is sufficient for our conversion ; and, at the hour of death, we become, in the twinkling of an eye, faithful believers. But, let us observe these

instantaneous christians. Where is their faith, when it is necessary to produce it, and that they are told, *show me thy faith by thy works*? And, after all, what is to be expected from them? It is but in our own opinion, and in consequence of the false ideas we have of christianity, that we are good christians. We take what best pleases us in the commands of our saviour, some these, and some those. We part his precepts, as the soldiers parted his garments. But, O! fools that we are, this system of salvation is not to be found in the gospel; it is the work of our own foolish imaginations! But how comes it that you dread to bear the cross of Christ? Why do you dread his thorns and refuse to drink his cup? How comes it that you are not gentle, patient, temperate and chaste? We wish here below to enjoy the pleasures of vice. But do you not also aspire to the enjoyment of the pleasures of Heaven? Certainly. So you desire to be saved, and, at the same time, you will do what hinders you from obtaining salvation. This is a new religion! That of the heathens was less absurd. Is it, then, possible, that so many people have an intimate conviction of christianity, even to the sacrificing their life in support of its truth? Ah! he believes nothing who refuses to act in consequence of his belief. We are too indolent, too untractable, to accomplish the laws of Christ: their yoke would appear too heavy to us; and we will live in indepen-

dence, as our caprices direct. But, at length, what must we do? The gospel exists, the divine word inwardly torments these false Christians. Resolved to live differently from what christianity commands, either they give themselves no trouble even to try a religious life, and sleep in their sins; or they endeavour to deny God and his word; or they admit a God and no religion, which is an absurdity; or, finally, they believe in God, and form a religion to themselves, which is equally unreasonable and criminal.

“Many admit the existence of a supreme being; but they form the most chimerical ideas, concerning him: they must have a God according to their corrupt wills; a God good, full of clemency and mercy; but not a just God. ‘No,’ says the infidel, ‘I cannot comprehend that Jesus can be at once both God and man.’ But you are not required to understand it, but to believe it. If you could comprehend the whole plan of salvation, faith would be useless; the law of your reason would force you to acknowledge as true, whatever you clearly conceive, and faith would no longer be faith. ‘If I submit,’ it is said, ‘to the precepts of the gospel, I must renounce a thousand species of luxury, I must abstain from injuring my neighbour, I must forbid myself revenge, I must subject myself to the laws of chastity, to the most rigorous temperance.’ But, tell

me, would you that some one should offend you, hate you, persecute you, and deprive you of life? Would you that any one should blacken your character, dishonour your wife, or your daughter, or seize on your fortune? Why, then, would you wish to do to others, what you would not have done to yourself? Consider, my brother, how peaceful, how happy and heavenly, life would be, if no one offended his neighbour, if every one were industrious, if we served one another from love, if enmities, quarrels, and deceit were banished from society. Ah! the world would become the abode of bliss, a paradise, a heaven begun! God means the world should be thus: such are the laws and ordinances of the most high: it is thus the scriptures teach us. Can there exist a being, whose commands can be more for our advantage?

“The wicked trouble not themselves about futurity; they occupy themselves only with what is before their eyes; without anxiety concerning their souls, they shudder not at the thoughts of death; a pitiful objection makes them renounce their conviction of the immortality of the soul, which they exchange for a false conclusion which favours their propensities; they persuade themselves that all in them is mortal, in order to be delivered from the fear of everlasting torments. They reject the doctrine of Christ, and have never examined it; the gospel history, and

have no proof of its falsehood : all their principles are absurd. What would you say of one who should hold this language—‘ Luther never existed, nor reformed our church ; for I never saw him. I did not live then, and history may deceive us. Could the pen of one man exercise such an empire over so many towns and nations ?’ Do not the infidels reason thus, concerning the history of our saviour ? Have they any better arguments against it than these ? I am uncertain what part we should take, in regard to these unhappy persons, whether to pity, or refute them, despise, or oppose them.”

Such passages, and they are frequent in these sermons, prove, that there was warmth and vivacity in Gellert’s ideas ; and that, had the orator been more formed, he would have attained the power of awakening the attention of the coldest and most indifferent of his audience. He is, however, more animated and more pathetic, in more directly addressing his hearers ; of which the following is an example, taken from the same discourse.

“ Once converted, be resolved to die rather than relapse into sin. Have you renounced vice ? be it then to you henceforward an object of horror. Resist Satan and he will fly from you. Dread your own weakness, yet try your powers ; make your advantage of every resource, fly temptation, seek solitude ; let the angels draw you far from Sodom.

Pray, wrestle with the Almighty ! be not repulsed, elect of God ! Combat, persevere, there is the haven, there are the palms and crowns !”

It would be easy to produce many other passages which shew how much fire he infused into his compositions ; I shall cite only one or two more examples. In one of his discourses, he points out the absurdity of labouring, in the idea that our labouring alone is sufficient for our subsistence. “ It is foolish in us to believe, that it depends on ourselves to provide for our support. Many seem to think that God wants their assistance to govern the world. What they possess they think they have acquired by their own efforts. If they see the earth fertilized by the rains of the early and the latter season, if God crowns the year with his blessings, and if his clouds drop fatness* ; if their barns be filled with plenty, and if their presses shall burst out with new wine† ; they neglect to rise to the first cause. It is to the necessary laws of nature they attribute these effects ; they stop at the creatures, and deign not to elevate their minds to the Creator. Because they observe that labour is necessary to the enjoyment of certain natural productions, they will not attribute to God alone, what they themselves have had some share in producing. They do not comprehend that God has left certain vacuities in creation, if we may so ex-

* Psalm 65. v. xii.

† P. ch. 3. v. x.

press ourselves, to furnish man with an opportunity of exerting his powers usefully. But without the aid of the Supreme Being, it is impossible for man to provide his subsistence. The Lord need only shut up the fountains of Heaven, harden the earth, or drown the valleys, convert the sickles into swords, or encrease the heat of the sun, to destroy, in the twinkling of an eye, what the labour of ten years has hardly been sufficient to cultivate and gather in. Does the lightening dart and the thunder roll in the clouds? Do the hail-stones ravage our fields, and are they not suspended in the air?

“Have you never heard talk of dearth, of famine, of divers plagues, with which the master of the universe visits the nations? In such a time, subsist by your labour! eat, satisfy yourself! when there is nothing to be found capable of appeasing your hunger!”

It will be readily imagined, that these attempts are not all equal, as to the justness and maturity of the ideas contained in them; and their author condemned them to oblivion. However, we know, on indisputable authority, that they were much liked in his native town, and that the inhabitants were never tired of hearing him. It could hardly happen otherwise; it was then very unusual to hear divine truths proposed with sentiment, and in a style at once noble and intelligible. The youth promised so much, that

great expectation could not but be formed of the man.

His circumstances did not allow him to devote the whole of his time, to the cultivation of his own talents. In 1739, at the recommendation of Mr Lofcher, he undertook, during a twelve month, the care of the Messieurs de Luttichau, two young gentlemen, who resided not far from Dresden. Afterwards, he also directed the studies of one of his nephews, and one of his brothers; this last died at the school at Freiberg. He reckoned this as one of the happiest and most tranquil years of his life, and often recollected, with a lively gratitude, the health, contentment and chearfulness, which accompanied the exercise of his duties. He applied himself with redoubled zeal, to the instruction of his pupils; prayed with joy and assiduity, was attentive to the examination of his soul, full of ardour towards virtue, and of hatred towards vice; severe towards himself in regard to pleasure, penetrated with love towards the author of his being. "At night," he says, "when I had finished my lessons, a bit of bread, dipt in some wine, the produce of Meissen, revived me so much, as to make me shed tears of gratitude." Even at this time, he so-religiously observed the duties of divine worship that, without extreme necessity, he would not have written a letter on the Sunday; and throughout his life, he endea-

voured to employ that day in a manner conformable to its destination. He used thus to express himself on this subject, " we think too lightly of the duties of Sunday, and I am convinced, that a holy employment of that sacred day, is an indispensable means; and the most useful of all, for quickening our progress in religion and piety. Then, to withdraw ourselves from all earthly occupations, to make a serious examination of our hearts, to raise them to heaven, to nourish them with the truths founded on faith, is to fortify them for the whole week, to prepare ourselves for a faithful discharge of the duties of our calling. He who employs Sunday well, can he make a bad use of the remainder of the week? He who does not employ it well, can he hold himself obliged to make a good use of the week that follows? Listen to me, whoever you are who read this; it is on our mode of employing Sunday, that depends the use we make of the week. Forget on that day, all the little interests of earth. Consecrate yourselves entirely to heaven and religion. Awaken your minds to the sense of God's mercies; enjoy the conversation of your pious friends, rejoice in the felicity which is their portion, in the beauties and in the wonders of nature. Pray, give thanks, examine your heart, your virtues, your weaknesses, and remark the obstacles which oppose themselves to your improvement in piety. Acknowledge that

it is from God alone, that you derive the power of labouring to procure your real well-being. Request humbly of him the strength to do it, and be grateful for the help you have already obtained. Amidst the tumult of the world and the occupations of life, we too easily lose the sentiment of our weakness and misery, if we do not set apart a certain portion of time for meditating on our insufficiency, and on the power and goodness of God ; on our nothingness, and on his greatness. Sunday should be devoted to these occupations ; it is the day of prayer and rest, in which the soul applies to the source of true felicity. The better your dispositions, the more active your zeal in discharging your duties, the more secure you will think your progress in virtue, the more reason you will have to fear the surprises of spiritual pride. Consecrate, therefore, the Lord's day to acts of humility, to the exercise of that virtue which appears to us so difficult, and from which we are often the furthest removed, in proportion to the approaches we seem to make towards the others. Impress your heart deeply with the meditation of this great truth : that your existence, your felicity, or your misery, your faith, your piety, are entirely and wholly dependent on the Supreme Being. Entertain a deep sense of the goodness of God, and of your own

weakness. Be not satisfied with acknowledging that your personal advantages are derived from God. It is possible for pride to conceal itself under this apparent humility ; we may ascribe to God the advantages by which we are distinguished, and, at the same time, nourish in the heart a presumption that we deserve them better than others, on account of the good use we have the judgment to make of them. Let this pride be annihilated on the Lord's day, and in order to triumph over it have recourse to prayer. In exchange for some social pleasures, which you sacrifice, you will enjoy the noblest satisfactions, the ineffable comforts of piety, that heavenly peace, which none can taste who have not learnt to fly the tumult of the world, and to detach themselves for a time from the little interests of the earth. How many excellent authors, may a Christian read to his satisfaction ; authors fitted to enlighten his mind, and to strengthen in him the conviction of the truth and excellency of the doctrine he professes ? And ought he not to aspire to improve more and more ? Let him then employ himself on this day in meditating on the holy scriptures and the books which explain them, read the history of the church ; amongst the great number of writers in divinity, read them that affect you the most. Sauren, Mosheim, Jerusalem, Acken Cramer Schelegel, and those who seek to imitate them, are they not orators fit-

ted for all orders of Christians, useful to the most instructed, as well as to the less informed * ?”

When Gellert thought his nephew sufficiently prepared to receive advantage from academical instructions, he conducted him, in 1741, to Leipfick, as much to continue his superintendence of this young man, as to acquire for himself an increase of knowledge, and to fit himself more and more for being useful in society. He was not yet decided as to the line of life he should pursue; but, placing his trust in Providence, he had the general view to do good, and to be as useful to others as possible. “I was far,” says he, of himself, “from being in abundance when I went for the second time to Leipfick; but I must also acknowledge, that God never allowed me to want what was necessary, even for a day. I remember that, on seeing this much flowed town, I wished that it might please God so to direct what concerned me, as that I might pass my life in it. This wish has been gratified; though certainly at the time I formed it, my hopes exten-

* These being all foreign books, and, perhaps, either not translated, or not easy to be come at by the generality of English readers, I think it may not be amiss to specify some English books of the same sort, Archbishop Tillotson's and Seed's Sermons, Newton and Kett, on the Prophecies, Butler's Analogy, Bowdler on the Revelations, Sermons by Mrs H. Bowdler, Bishop Wilton's Works, Archbishop Secker's Sermons, Randolph's Sermon's on Advent, Hall's Sermon, are of this sort, with many others too numerous to mention here.

ded no farther than to the being able to compleat my studies in that university." When at Leipfick, he employed himself in giving instructions to some young gentlemen; but, he applied himself, above all, in extending his own information, and in improving more and more his understanding; nor did he refuse to himself the pleasure of cultivating his talent for poetry. He did not aim to acquire a vast extent of erudition: His health would not allow of it, and the melancholy which oppressed him, forbad him a too sedentary life, and did not allow of his sitting too long. "Were I to have been learned," said he, "I should have wished to be a Mosheim or an Ernesti. The latter, in my opinion, may in himself supply to youth the place of an entire academy, and is as superior to the generality of philologists, as Mosheim is to other orators. I owe my Latinity to Cicero, whom I have read over and over, frequently aloud, and from whose works I have copied a great number of passages. As to the French language, I have chiefly learnt it by reading and translating. But of all the languages of which I have any knowledge, the English tongue, to which I applied the latest, was that which I learnt with most facility, thanks to the instructions of my friend Ebert *."

* Mr John Arnold Ebert, who has made several excellent translations from English, and among others, Young's Night Thoughts.

As Gellert felt that his taste was not mature, or sufficiently just, he applied himself carefully to improve it, in order to be more useful. When his friends asked him how he had attained to the formation of his taste, he answered, " By the study of Cicero, by reading Rollin on the Belles Lettres, the Spectator, and lastly, by associating with Gärtner and my other friends, authors of the Bremen Journal, by their judgments, their criticisms, and their approbation. Besides the above mentioned ancients and moderns, I also read the rhetoric of Quintillian, and the poetics of Horace. Whatever admiration I might have for the wit and ease of Ovid, I never could prevail on myself to read the whole of his works : he has great beauties, but is often deficient in taste. I hold reading, particularly the ancient authors, to be indispensably necessary to forming the judgment, and to the acquisition of solid learning. But the study of the ancient philosophers is attended with danger ; because they are more calculated to inspire pride, than to improve the mind in wisdom and virtue. Their moral maxims are admirable, and persuade the heart that it may attain to perfection by its own strength. The mind rejoices in virtue and happiness attainable by man ; but conscience soon refutes this proud system, when it tries to become virtuous without the assistance of a heavenly Guide. De-

tached passages of Seneca, have often excited my admiration ; but when I attempted to read his works regularly, they no longer interested me ; and if I persisted in reading his writings for some hours, they tired me even to disgust. Seneca was, however, a man of genius ; but, in places where he appears little, it is owing to an affectation of wit that he becomes so, and by the uniformity and monotony of the ornaments he affects to use.

“ The ancients are masters in the art of thinking and writing, on matters of wit and taste ; on this account, they cannot be too much admired ; but, we should be more reserved and circumspect in the praises we bestow on their morality. They weaken imperceptibly in the minds of youth, the respect due to religious morality ; the more so that the dry and languid manner in which religion is taught us in childhood, is but too well calculated to make us cold and indifferent in the practice of it. We embrace Christianity, and put on its outward appearance, without acting according to its true precepts. Moreover, when we methodically study religion, it often happens that we do not sufficiently feel what it possesses of divine ; and we persuade ourselves, that as we are capable of apprehending its system, we may also by our strength practice its precepts. By this strange abuse, religion, which ought to humble us, only serves to nourish our pride. Why

do so many young people, who are otherwise well disposed, neglect prayer, unless because they presume too much on their weak reason, and that they flatter themselves they shall be always virtuous by their own strength? It is a false shame, which makes us blush to implore the assistance of Heaven, so necessary to us. From thence it happens, that these presumptuous young people, refusing to pay homage to the Divine Spirit, who alone can change and sanctify our hearts, attribute the glory of so doing to themselves, and flatter themselves with being able to resist temptations, and conquer their propensities; thus sinking into security, from which arise the vices so dangerous to youth. Would to God, that in our earliest years, instead of teaching us religion as a profession, or as an ordinary science, pains were taken to impress our minds with its beauty, to make us sensible how amiable and divine it is, to show us that without obedience to its precepts peace cannot dwell in our hearts, nor tranquillity in our consciences; and to warn us, that as our understanding becomes more and more enlightened, we ought more and more to study that holy religion, and constantly make use of its truths, as of the means most efficacious for improving our virtue, and setting us forward in the road to perfection. We should then perceive that life is but a preparation for eternity; that independent of eternity this

life would be nothing, or an inexplicable enigma ; that faith in our Redeemer is truly the wisdom from on high, that it constitutes our glory, that it is the only foundation of all our happiness ; finally, that man cannot refuse to believe, without renouncing, at the same time, that reason of which he boasts. " If these truths, and these sentiments had taken deep root in our souls before we became scholars, we might without danger read those ancient authors, whose writings are so fitted to adorn the human understanding. So far from being prejudicial, they would be very useful : The taste and information we should draw from this source, would be profitable to religion and virtue, and would never serve to feed our pride."

We see that Gellert did not confine himself to enlightening and cultivating his understanding, but that he applied with no less zeal to improve his heart, which, in truth, ought to be every man's chief study. He never lost sight of religion ; and hence it is that his works tend all, more or less, to the advancement of piety and virtue. He can never deserve the reproach so justly due to many celebrated writers from their readers, and which, sooner or later, they will make to themselves, of having criminally abused the finest and noblest talents.

Gellert had passed near a year at Leipzick, when there began to be published, a work entitled, A-

amusements of the Heart and understanding. Gellert was engaged to be one of the coadjutors in this periodical work ; he inserted many tales and fables, some didactic poems, and several discourses in Prose.

The friends of Gellert know with what severity he himself judged his first productions. Some of them he did not think even worthy of correction ; and this severity towards his own works, improperly understood, has drawn on him some pretty harsh criticisms.

But how imperfect soever his first attempts might be, so many beauties were discovered in them, that scarcely had he shewn himself amongst the German poets, when all eyes were turned towards him.

The moment some new piece of the periodical work, he was engaged in, appeared, the reader's first care was to seek out some tale or fable of Gellert's ; they were perused with eagerness, they were read over and over, and learned by heart. The easy and natural stile of his narrations, perfectly simple and unaffected, the sweetness and amenity of his verses, the natural expression of a young poet seeking to please his readers, to instruct and to make them better, who was playful without offence, whose laughter was never tinged with bitterness, but whose smiles were those of friendship or compassion ; all these qualities were so attractive, that from month to month the public taste for his

works became more lively and more general. It is not therefore surprising, that Gellert finding his fables succeeded, conciliated to him the general esteem, and enabled him to be useful to his countrymen, should take delight in cultivating a species of poetry, which from the earliest ages, has been considered as best calculated to convey lessons of wisdom.

About this time Gellert contracted a sincere and intimate friendship with Mr John Elias Schlegel, whose brother he had known at Meissen, which was founded on the talents of this poet, who first introduced the Tragic muse into Germany.

As long as he lived at Leipzick, he was the chief companion of our author, who equally loved and respected him ; for Gellert's soul was incapable of jealousy, and though, doubtless, he aspired to be esteemed and considered himself, could see without vexation, that others were his superiors in talents and merit, or rather he was naturally disposed to have a better opinion of others than of himself. A proof of this appears in the picture he has drawn of his friend Schlegel and his brothers. " As soon as I learnt to know J. E. Schlegel," says Gellert, " we were friends. He always surpassed me in erudition, in criticism and in genius. His countenance was prepossessing, his talents were uncommon, and his love for study unwearied. He was

passionately fond of the belles lettres, and cultivated them with ardour. His father, however, wished him to apply to the study of law, that he might undergo his examination and receive a doctor's degree. My friend almost detested the pandects, and had but a slight knowledge of law; but to gratify a father truly respectable in every sense, he did violence to his inclinations, and during three months, studied with as much zeal, as if he had aspired to become a second Cujas; and passed most honourably through his examinations. Professor Rechemberg, who was then Dean, filled with admiration of this young man, wished to procure him a situation, in order to put him in the way of obtaining the highest stations in that profession. So true it is, that a man well grounded in the humanities, who possesses the learned languages, and who has genius, can in a very short time make an almost incredible progress in the higher sciences. Schlegel still engaged in the study of the classics, had eagerly read the Greek and Latin authors, and continued to read them. He understood French, Italian, and English, knew all the best authors in those languages, and owed his knowledge almost entirely to himself. He was named to go to Copenhagen as Secretary of Legation, with his cousin Mr Spener, envoy from the court of Saxony. Seeing that in order to fill this post, it was not only necessary to write, but also to

speak, French well, he passed some months with Mr
 Mauvillon, to improve himself in this particular.
 He succeeded so well, that Mr Mauvillon spoke of
 him as one of his best scholars. Schlegel could
 apply for days together without interruption ; but
 after so doing, he generally allowed himself one
 day to rest, to see company and amuse himself with
 his friends. When any one criticised his verses, he
 disputed and defended himself with warmth, and
 went off with the pride of a poet, who thinks he
 feels what is fine, better than those who criticise
 him ; but after some hours, he returned full of hu-
 mility, having successfully corrected what had been
 disapproved. He reformed without murmur entire
 scenes in his tragedies. One of the occupations
 most agreeable to him, was the forming some plan
 for a drama ; and like Racine, he generally began
 by writing it in prose. No one had the forming
 of Schlegel's mind : he owed all his genius to rea-
 ding. I am sorry there does not exist any portrait
 of him. He was fair, his clear blue eyes were
 sunk in a high and ample forehead, they were
 spirited, half gay and half melancholy, sometimes a
 little inclined to fun, sometimes serious. His up-
 per lip turned a little up, his nose was aquiline, and
 all together these features formed a noble physiogno-
 my, which his expressive eyes frequently rendered
 truly interesting. Whenever he met his friends he

embraced them with a lively and impetuous joy. He was full of regards and attentions to women ; however, I do not know, that he was ever passionately attached to any one. Had he been so, and that the object of his love had disapproved his propensity for theatrical composition, I believe he would have given up his love, however amiable his mistress might have been in other respects, rather than this propensity. He was fond of reading his verses, in order to form a judgment of the impression they made ; but he declaimed them badly.

“ I went on foot with him to Lindenau, to meet his brother John Adolphus, who came from Pforte to Leipfick. John Adolphus did not please me at all at first sight, and it is certain that his physiognomy did not announce the excellency of his heart. This same Schlegel became, however, afterwards my intimate friend ; and I shall to my latest hour retain the attachment, esteem and admiration he inspired me with on a further acquaintance. I had not a long enjoyment of his eldest brother's society at Leipfick : he died at Soroëë, where he had with great success filled a professor's chair, in the academy of the nobles. Honour his memory, O youthful children of the muses ! Young people who wish to distinguish yourselves in the paths of science, study his works, for he formed himself in the school of the ancients.

“ John Henry, the fourth of the Schlegels, professor at Copenhagen, would have even surpassed his brothers in goodness of heart, had it been possible to surpass them in this particular. He was as much distinguished by his piety, his virtues, and his gentleness of manners, as by his genius, his erudition, and his indefatigable application to study. Finally, the youngest of the Schlegels, who is still a famous preacher, is also a man of singular merit, and every way worthy of his brothers. He conceals, under a reserved and unprepossessing outward appearance, the most feeling and virtuous heart. Like all my other friends, he loved to be set right and to receive advice; ever an excellent quality in a young man. He was frequently my comforter in my fits of melancholy. These five Schlegels, all studied at Pforte, Meßien, and at Leipzick; and what high honour do four of them bestow on those schools! I say *four*, for though the eldest, who entirely devoted himself to the law, was certainly a very estimable man from his information, and the qualities of his heart, he, nevertheless, did not equal his brothers in talents. What a happy and respectable family, to have produced four personages of such superior genius! Flourish, O house of Schlegel! and may distinguished men, who apply themselves to promote wisdom and virtue in human society, and who labour for the advancement of

talte and virtue, ever spring from thee ! May the benediction of a venerable, though unfortunate father, full of probity and knowledge, ever rest on his descendants, as it has visibly rested on his sons !”

Such was the heart of Gellert towards his friends ; and with these touching effusions of tenderness he expressed himself concerning them. His soul poured itself forth in praises, whenever he mentioned them in his letters, in conversation, or in his lessons. He was always desirous of seeing them as much loved and esteemed by others, as they were by himself ; and his sentiments towards them were principally founded on their moral qualities. Wherever he discovered, or thought he discovered those virtues, his whole heart warmed immediately. His friendship was not merely the effect of natural disposition ; it was produced by a sincere love for religion and virtue. He strongly felt that they alone can make any one truly amiable, that they alone constitute happiness ; and when he met with persons unfortunate enough not to possess these qualities, he was touched with a most lively compassion, and neglected nothing in his power to make them better, and consequently happier. Some years after his return to Leipfick, he became acquainted with an unfortunate person of this kind. This man was like many others, who are said not to have a bad heart.

The love of pleasure and libertinism led him to infidelity, and from hence he passed on to disorders, which equally destroyed his health and his fortune. Attacked by an illness equally disgraceful and painful, he wanted for every thing : He had neither tranquillity of mind, consolation, the means of procuring to himself any assistance, nor any hope of recovery ; which hope, can alone support the despisers of religion, and give them that degree of calmness ever necessary to their bodily cure. Despair and impatience aggravated the sufferings of this poor wretch : The most horrible oaths proceeded from his mouth every moment ; there was no imprecation he did not pronounce against himself ; no blasphemy he did not utter against Providence. Gellert, touched with compassion by this man's dreadful sufferings, and above all, by the deplorable state of his soul, was very desirous of relieving him. With this view, he began by endeavouring to gain his confidence, to convince him of the interest he took in him, and of the tender compassion he felt for his bodily sufferings. To have begun by speaking to him of religion and of his soul, would only have terrified him. Gellert seemed, therefore, entirely taken up with his illness, and the means of procuring him some alleviation to his sufferings. He assisted him as much as he could, and with the utmost attention and delicacy interested his friends in

his behalf, and thus procured him the assistance and comforts required to calm his mind a little, and put him in a capacity of reflecting. Highly disgusting as was his illness, Gellert was continually with him, ever attentive to assist him, to amuse him, to alleviate his sufferings, and, above all, to let him see that tender sympathy, so consoling to the wretched, and which Gellert's eyes so well expressed.

By little and little, the sick man's heart softened ; he became less ferocious, and, from regard to so good a friend, he moderated his transports, and the violence of his impatience. This sensibility to the friendship of an amiable and benevolent man, disposed him, by degrees, to that more noble and sublime love, with which Gellert sought to inspire him. The sick man began to possess himself, and soon came to reflect ; from reflection he passed to repentance, and to sincere endeavours to moderate his desperation, to restrain his tongue, and to abstain from those horrible oaths, which had become so habitual to him. At length, he not only permitted, but requested his friend to give him notice, when from the violence of pain, he was in danger of forgetting himself. From day to day, his perplexity, his anxiety concerning his future state, and his desire of still obtaining forgiveness from God, became more lively. Till then, he had ridiculed the ministers of the gospel ; now, he earnestly wished to

be instructed and consoled by them. He became more and more resigned to the will of God; his patience encreased with his sufferings. He lived longer than was expected, and sometimes found himself so much relieved, that it seemed as if he might still indulge a hope of recovery. Gellert, in the mean time, had the joy of seeing the daily progress of his conversion. He left him only when his other indispensable duties obliged him to it, and applied his utmost, and unceasing care, to strengthen in the sick man's mind, on one side, the sense of his unworthiness, and abhorrence of his passed irregularities, and, on the other, the hope of obtaining mercy and forgiveness. This penitent sinner drew near his end. One day, when Gellert was alone with him, and they were praying together, the sick man grew suddenly faint, seized the hand of his friend, blessed, and thanked him, recommended his soul to God, and expired. Gellert, surprised by a death so sudden and so calm, could hardly believe what he saw, and called for help; but, seeing his presence was now become useless, he withdrew, full of emotion, of joy, and of gratitude for the grace of God, which, he trusted, had made him instrumental to the salvation of an immortal soul.

We may perceive, from this history, with what zeal Gellert would have laboured for the true happiness of

men, had the weakness of his constitution permitted him to devote himself as he wished to the holy ministry. Though not yet an absolute valetudinarian, his health was never so good as it generally is at his age. As to attend on public functions, which must be performed on certain days, and which are perpetually recurring, a firm state of health is requisite, he resolved rather to devote himself to the academical instruction of youth. He did not decidedly profess to teach religion and morality; but he hoped to associate them with studies to which they appear foreign. Whilst fulfilling the duties of his vocation, he wished also to make himself useful to his fellow-creatures, in regard to their eternal interests; as being, of all modes of becoming useful, that of which a man, who aspires to immortality, is the most ambitious. Thus it is, that even piety and virtue sometimes employ circuitous modes of making their way to the human heart. He proposed, then, to himself, to form the task of his pupils, but so as to make them feel, that the pleasures of the understanding, are still more enobled and perfected by piety. In this view, he acquired the right of giving public lessons in the year 1745, 1746, after having taken his degree in the faculty of belles lettres, and sustained theses, according to custom. The dissertation he published on this occasion, treated of fa-

bulous poetry, and the principal fabulists. The art of teaching was not new to him, and he improved in it more and more ; however, he never carried with him, to the academical chair, that boldness, on which some professors pique themselves, and which they often affect, merely to impose on their disciples, and to mask their own ignorance.

Gellert did not entirely confine himself to being of use by his academical lessons ; he wished to be so also by his writings. As he believed, with reason, that fables were the kind of poetry best suited to his talents, he determined to print his. We have already said, that he had previously inserted many tales and fables in the “ Amusements of the Heart and Understanding,” and that these essays had been well received. But this success had not increased his presumption ; and he was far from having that high opinion of himself, which prevents so many writers from giving that degree of perfection to their works, which they might have acquired, if a little mistrust of their abilities had engaged them to write with more care and exactness. Gellert, sensible of the necessity, and the advantages of this too rare mistrust, first read over his fables to his friend Gärtner, and afterwards to the whole society of his particular friends, and required to be judged by them with severity.

Amongst Gellert's tales, the character of a de-

votee, was particularly admired. This gave him the idea of employing his talents in works of taste, and in the reformation of the theatre, with a view to make this public entertainment more moral, and, consequently, more useful. Gellert having composed his comedy entitled the Devotee, at the desire of his friends, it was published in the Bremen magazine, as well as the tale which bore that title. This piece was extremely well received, but afterwards became a source of much vexation to Gellert. Accessary ideas, which are awakened by certain expressions, occasion disgust to delicacy, against things which would not wound it at all, if they were presented under other images and words. Perhaps this delicacy, supposing it to be innocent, and not itself the effect of hypocrisy, might have found less fault with the title of hypocrite, than with that of devotee; for all the sincere friends of religion and piety must take pleasure in seeing those persons unmasked, and given up to the public contempt, who are religious only in appearance, or who make piety and devotion consist merely in outward and puerile observances.

This was the end Gellert proposed to himself, and no more is wanting to be assured of it, than to cast our eyes on the preface he has placed at the head of his dramatic works. It is not necessary, here, to enter into researches concerning the morality of the

stage, and the advantages and disadvantages of this public amusement, now become almost necessary about courts, and in great cities. There is so little precision in what modern philosophers, such as Rousseau, and D'Alembert, as well as some theologians, have written for and against the stage, that the question is become more difficult to decide, and too long a digression would be required to place it in a new light. It is not easy to ascertain what impression may be made on spectators at the theatres, or on readers in their closets, by faithful pictures of the vices we should shun, and of the virtues we should love, if we consider the various dispositions brought by these persons, whether to the stage, or to the closet. It is difficult to deduce from this knowledge, the rules necessary to be observed by an author for succeeding, not only in pleasing, but in correcting. Finally, it is difficult to decide how far the impression of pleasure, produced by the art of imitation, the truth of the pictures, and the charm of representation, may contribute, or be detrimental to the end proposed ; which is to turn to the profit of virtue, and the love of excellence, those sentiments which must be excited by every faithful description of a hateful, odious, or ridiculous object.

It is not by the magisterial decision of a philosopher or a theologian, that we ought to determine what influence the stage has on morals, and whether

it may not contribute, by the poet's fault, or by some other cause, to foment human passions. But this is certain, that theologian or not, a man who calls himself a Christian, and is such in fact, ought not to think himself authorized to pronounce in this matter, without having examined whether his understanding is sufficiently enlightened for the task ; for much judgment is certainly requisite, to decide on the morality of a kind of amusement and pleasure, which must be owned to have nothing criminal in its nature, but merely to become so from certain accessory causes, which it might not be impossible to remove.

If not possessed of all the knowledge requisite for such a discussion, we are in danger of mistaking, and of advancing opinions quite opposite, and no less erroneous. Persons, who have, in other respects, studied morality pretty accurately, may be very bad judges in these matters, if they are not sufficiently acquainted with works of taste, and the influence they may have on the human mind ; of the utility to be derived from them by religion, and of the harmony which may exist between virtue and the pleasures of the understanding. Moralists, who are not sufficiently enlightened on these points, ought to confine themselves to general exhortations, "*to prove all things, and hold to that which is good,*" to be moderate in the use of pleasures, to avoid what may

too much stimulate the passions; and take care that the amusements we allow ourselves, may not inspire us with disgust towards religious duties. To exceed these bounds on the subject, is likely to draw us into declamation, to make us exceed in severity, and to inspire distrust, even, though all we say, should, on every other point of morality, be most indisputably rational.

Gellert proposed to himself, in his dramatic works, to attack vice and folly, and, by drawing the most interesting pictures of virtue, to inspire the minds of men with the love of it.

After publishing his first play, Gellert published the first volume of his tales and fables. The merit of these apologues is so plain and incontestable, that I might venture to affirm, that could we look into the judgment of posterity, we should find them to be ranked amongst the German classics. They serve as amusements to youth, whose hearts we wish to form and whose taste we wish to improve. They have the suffrage of the female sex, which deviates least from nature, and which often forms as good a judgment from feeling, as we do from the rules of art. In a word, mothers rehearse them to their daughters, and the severest scholar would be ashamed to speak of them with indifference, or contempt. The choice of subjects, the moral, the style, all please, all do honour to the judgment, the un-

derstanding, and the heart of the poet. He does not rise so high as to be above the sight of the multitude, but he takes care not to descend so low as to escape the attention of good understandings. .

All nations abound in critics, who seem to have only one standard of merit, and who assign to each work of genius, its rank, according to the views and passions which reign in their own minds, and that with the most entire and dogmatical confidence. We cannot determine how far Gellert might have been susceptible to the censure of these critics ; but the desire of obtaining their praises, would certainly never have been the end he proposed to himself in his works.

“ My greatest ambition,” said he, in a letter to a friend, “ is to please and make myself useful to reasonable people, rather than to mere scholars.

“ I attach more importance to the approbation of a sensible woman, than to the praises of a periodical paper ; and, in my opinion, one of the populace, if he is endowed with a sound judgment, well deserves that I should seek to fix his attention, to contribute to his amusement, and in narratives easily retained, to set useful truths before him, fitted to excite good emotions in his soul.”

A poet so much the friend of mankind, must have experienced feelings the most agreeable, when in the beginning of one winter he saw a Saxon pea-

fant drive up to his door, a cart loaded with firewood, who demanded of him himself, whether he was not the gentleman who composed such fine tales? On the answer he received, the peasant, joy sparkling in his eyes, with many excuses for the liberty he took, made Gellert a present of the contents of his cart, as a feeble mark of his gratitude for the pleasure he had received from reading his tales. Beauties exist, which every one may feel without having studied Aristotle; and Gellert was more affected by the simple praise proceeding from a good heart, than he was disturbed by certain critics, who unjustly reproached him with having imitated La Fontaine. "People will have it," says Gellert, "that I have imitated La Fontaine, and I can assure them it is not true. I had friends able in criticism, for which I am much indebted to circumstances. Convinced of their knowledge, docile in following their advice, I corrected my works without murmuring; I had sense enough to wish only to write for persons of understanding, and in that consisted all my wisdom. I never was able to imitate, and this my writings sufficiently prove: They would often be better, had I known how to profit by the example of my predecessors." Before the publication of his first volume of fables, Gellert had composed, in 1746, his second comedy, entitled the Lottery Ticket, a pastoral poem, and the

Oracle ; but this was not enough to satisfy his activity. The Germans had no good original romances at this period. The French have many works of this kind, ingenious enough, and well enough written, to furnish an agreeable amusement, and charm the *ennui* of idle readers. But the too common effect of this kind of reading, is to foment the passions rather than to correct them. These works, in which the spirit of chivalry sometimes prevails, and sometimes that frivolous stile of gallantry, so dangerous for the heart, are translated, are spread, and must have influence on the nation which reads them, in proportion as they are well received. Gellert wishing to try a new method of being useful, and to give more importance and dignity to this agreeable species of writing, composed the Swedish Countess. In this fiction, he paints pretty extraordinary adventures, and his descriptions are somewhat gloomy ; so that, were it not for some similarity in the stile and mode of narrating, it would be difficult to believe that this romance and Gellert's fables were written by the same author. The desire of instructing through the medium of amusement, is the distinguishing feature of this, as well as all his other works. Some celebrated romances, written after Gellert's, may have eclipsed its merits, but a judicious critic will cer-

tainly judge a first original writing of this kind with indulgence.

Gellert was, even so early as this period of his life, subject to those distressing attacks of melancholy which so much embittered his days. Notwithstanding the strictest regimen, notwithstanding frequent exercise, and his attention to avoid excess of application, he never could attain to procure himself a more confirmed state of health. Already one portion of his days, days so useful to society, were days of suffering. His virtue and his piety furnished him with the necessary courage to support with patience the first attacks of his complaint, and to look forward, without terror, to a prospect of long protracted suffering. He sought, in religion, the resources and consolations which might soften a state of painful illness; and his feeling heart, ever alive to the sufferings of his fellow creatures, awakened in his mind the idea of furnishing them with the alleviations he had drawn from that source, by publishing, in 1747, a book, entitled, "Consolations for Valetudinarians," which was as eagerly received as his other works, and translated into many different languages. The character of Mentor, in this book, is a picture, the principal features of which Gellert borrowed from himself, a circumstance which makes it the more affecting, as it exhibits a faithful representation of those sufferings, which al-

most every day of his life renewed. However violent these attacks, nothing could slacken his zeal for the young academicians, whom he instructed by his conversation and his lessons. Each interval of health was made use of for the public. Whenever a walk in the fields, or in the smiling bowers of Rosenthal, had procured him any relief, he employed himself in reviewing, correcting, and augmenting his dramatic works, of which he printed a volume, in 1747. The next year he published the Continuation of his Tales and Fables. In his preface, he expresses with a modest candour, the pleasure he had received from the success of the first part of that work. "To testify my gratitude," says he, "I know no better way than to show to connoisseurs the joy I derive from their approbation."

It is necessary to have felt anxiously, the proud wish of pleasing the rational part of mankind, to have often feared not to deserve this honour, to recollect the trouble our works have cost us, all the alterations and corrections we have made in them, attended frequently with more difficulty than composition itself; to reckon up all those pieces we have had the courage to sacrifice to the apprehension that they were not deserving of the public eye; it is necessary, I say, to comprehend all these, to understand how flattering the approbation of an enlightened judge is to an author; and the high value he

sets even on the satisfied look of an intelligent reader, who stops at particular passages. These suffrages serve as a testimony to the poet, that he has not wandered far from nature, and that the sportive genius of his muse has neither wounded the laws of duty or propriety. "But," continues Gellert, "will this second part answer to the idea entertained of the first? Let me not, in this question, be accused of a false modesty, neither let any one hastily conclude that it is produced by a bad conscience. I have taken as much pains in the composition of these new fables, as in those preceding them; and it very seldom happens that an author who respects the public, can allow himself to write with negligence." In the continuation of this preface, he explains his reasons for entertaining the doubt he expresses, and that in a manner very instructive both for writers and critics. The public has decided the question which Gellert would not take on himself to resolve, and posterity will join us in deciding that the second part of his fables is by no means unequal to the first, as to invention and style, but surpasses it, in some respects, because it announces a riper judgment in the poet, and a more attentive observation of the beauties of nature. This praise may, perhaps, to some persons, appear suspicious, and they will think they discover in it the style of friendship; but when the question is to appreciate productions beautiful in

themselves, and visibly intended to correct the vices and follies of men whilst contributing to their amusement, what equitable judge would refuse to praise them, were they even the productions of an enemy? to speak otherwise of them, to seek to depreciate them, and boast of so doing, could only be done by an odious character. The best compositions have their weak sides, and have flaws which it is proper to point out: To extend admiration even to faults, would be a kind idolatry, unworthy of a free being. But if we ought to abstain from praising the faults, even of the greatest geniuses, their talents, and the good use they make of them, surely demand our highest esteem. Not to observe this justice with regard to our author, would be a failure towards mankind, to which no one ever shewed himself more friendly than Gellert.

Gellert had lived about seven years with his intimate friends, the authors of the Bremen Journal: The union which subsisted between them was most uncommon; for they were no less united by the agreement of their tastes, their talents, their writings and their views, than by reciprocal attachment.

At length, this society dispersed: Zachary Giesecke, and Klopstock, had quitted Leipzig; Schmidt was called to Lunebourg, Gärtner and Ebert, to Brunswick; Cramer, to Crollwitz; and John Adol-

phus Schlegel, to Pforta. Rabener alone, passed some years more with his friend. Gellert felt the more sensibly the loss of his other friends, from being accustomed to find part of that serenity, of which his habitual melancholy deprived him, return in their society. His disorder encreased ; but without prejudice to the exercise of his duties, and without suspending the instructions he gave to the students. The few comfortable moments he could dispose of, he employed in making a collection of his letters, at the request of Rabener, or in composing his moral poems ; his first piece of this kind seems to be one entitled Pride.

Rabener had long wished that the epistolary stile of his countrymen should acquire a more easy and natural turn, and that those customary forms, which made it stiff and diffuse, should be banished from it. His various affairs and connections, obliged him to write and receive many letters ; and from hence he was the first to discover the necessity of a reformation in the epistolary stile. He justly thought, that no one was better calculated to contribute to this change than an author so much esteemed and beloved by the nation as Gellert. Knowing, however, Gellert's aversion to every new attempt in regard to works of literature, he had recourse to stratagem, and found means to engage him in this enterprise unawares to himself. He proposed to him to pub-

lish in concert with him some anonymous letters, and to engage their mutual friends to furnish something towards this collection. On these conditions Gellert, who had, at first, shewn himself very irrefolute, consented to the proposal and chose from amongst some letters he had written, of which one of his female friends had obtained copies, such as might answer Rübener's views. Well satisfied with his German Pliny, Rübener put by carefully those letters he designed for the press, and then solicited Gellert to write on the epistolary stile, to point out the faults to be avoided in it, and to lay down some principles of taste proper to improve it. Gellert, who could never refuse to his friends any thing they earnestly desired, composed a treatise on the subject, and Rübener obtained of him leave to print it, together with the above mentioned letters.

Gellert was far from entertaining a partial opinion of these letters. In 1768, he wrote thus to M. Schlegel, whilst a new general edition of his works was publishing. "I cannot undertake to make any considerable alteration in the text, and, nevertheless, it would be necessary to correct many things, particularly in my letters and my plays. I have not yet had the courage to look at them. But I assure you that I am absolutely incapable of undertaking the slightest degree of alteration in them, and I could have wished that no complete collection of my

works had been published during my life, but that after my death, one of my friends would have revised them, suppressed some of them, and published the remainder."

Is it possible to believe, that an author who expresses himself with so much modesty, could be attacked by the most bitter criticisms on his works?

After the publication of the letters, Gellert in 1754 published his didactic poems, and some tales composed many years before. The Germans had been long accustomed to require in poetry, a more lively colouring, more warmth, and more enthusiasm than was to be found in these poems. It is, therefore, not surprising that they should have been less liked than his fables. Gellert was aware of this; but without being more dissatisfied with them, than with the earlier productions of his youth, not from the propensity which poets sometimes have to prefer the least successful of their writings, as if to avoid to themselves the shame of confirming the public sentence, but because he felt that no vanity could be mixed with his opinion, that these poems might be useful to those who do not disdain verses that are merely instructive. Had any one questioned him on this subject, he would have readily owned, that his imagination no longer possessed that fire and lustre, which pleases so much by its brilliancy in poetical compositions; but had it depended on him to

possess them, he would, nevertheless, have restrained himself from making use of much ornament in this kind of poetry; in which he merely proposed to himself to give useful lessons with perspicuity and sentiment; because he rather wished the attention of his readers to be fixed on the important truths he placed before them, than on the brilliancy of his verses; persuaded, that written in the simplest stile, they may please the heart, though a richer vein of poetry might be more gratifying to taste. These poems will never fail to produce the effect he promised himself. It is impossible to read his poem entitled the Christian, without forming a wish and a resolution to realise this model. The colouring of this poem might indeed have had more splendour, but the mild mixture of its tints possesses a gentle charm, and a beauty which pleases more and more as we examine it. The sentiments do not arise to enthusiasm and passion; they have rather the warmth of a spring morning, than the glowing heat of a summer's day. Finally, these poems are the touching expression of a true love for virtue, and in Gellert's soul this was a mild and gentle sentiment. He sought, particularly whilst composing the Christian, to impress his mind in the most lively manner with a sense of the inestimable blessing of the redemption. This piece was written in the space of eleven days; that is to say, he devoted to it those

moments of leisure which the academical labours allowed him. "May I," said he, after having finished it, "reap the first fruits of it myself! May the ideas it develops serve to re-animate me, when I am depressed by melancholy! O God, make it contribute to the good of my soul!"

It was with these pious wishes ever in view, that Gellert had long laboured on the composition of his sacred songs. He never set himself to this employment without a serious preparation, and without having his heart previously filled with the sentiments he wished to express. He dedicated his best moments to this employment, which he often suspended, till he had still more deeply impressed his own mind with the sentiments he wished to excite in the minds of his readers. "I will for a time lay aside this work," says Gellert in his Journal, "perhaps God of his grace will inspire my mind with new vigour and improve my present dispositions." When he thought himself possessed of these in a requisite degree, he expressed them in his hymns; but that they might be of general utility, he endeavoured to adapt his ideas and emotions to the general capacity, and to the degree of intelligence, penetration and sensibility, which each Christian might possess.—Though Gellert had composed his sacred songs with the greatest care, he wished to communicate them to his friends and profit by their advice, before

he gave them to the public. He sent them, therefore, to his friends at Leipfick, at Zerbst, at Copenhagen, at Berlin, and at Brunfwick, who entered into his views : and, in confequence of their remarks, he altered feveral pieces. His gratitude to them for this fervice, fhews how much he had it at heart to give all poffible perfection to thefe facred fongs. “ Amongft my friends,” writes he, in one of his letters, “ Profeflor Schlegel of Zerbst, and my dear Heyer have diftinguifhed themfelves on this occafion. The firft of thefe has read my facred fongs over three times, and acquitted himfelf of the office of critic, with an unpitying feverity, and a wonderful fagacity ; can I ever fufficiently thank him? The other revived my courage ; for, whilft employed in making corrections, the pen was ready to fall from my hand. Excellent man ! Sometimes he was my cenfor, at others my copieft. God grant that thefe facred fongs may fulfil their end when I fhall have ceafed to live !” It is needlefs to expatiate further on their merit ; they have been faid to prove that their author wanted genius, but it is equally needlefs to clear them from this injufice. Thefe facred fongs bear the faithful impreffion of Gellert’s character : They fhew how deeply his mind was penetrated with the precepts of religion, how readily he acquiefced in its myfteries, how much he defired to be as good as this heavenly guide invites

us to become ; they shew his unfeigned humility, the moderation of his wishes, his love for his fellow creatures, his efforts to promote their happiness, and to subdue them to the benevolent empire of virtue and true piety. He frequently uses the language of scripture, but he prefers to metaphorical expressions, those which address themselves directly to the heart. The same choice appears in his hymns, which contain more reasoning than warmth, and are more intended to instruct, than to display sentiment. The authors of the Gottingen Journal published some disadvantageous extracts from this work. Gellert's mode of thinking and feeling was not considered by them in its true light, and the journalists prescribed rules in regard to his sacred songs, which a poet ought to be on his guard against adopting, if he wishes to labour for general edification. The universal success of our author's sacred songs is the best refutation of this criticism. In the mean time, our poet did not disavow being hurt by it : He apprehended that it might prove an obstacle to the salutary impressions he hoped they would make, or, at least, weaken them : This apprehension must, however, have vanished very soon : The opinion of the Gottingen journalists was the only one of its kind, and the work they censured was eagerly received by all the friends of religion.

No one was better aware than Rübener of the

merits of his friends sacred songs, nor has better expressed it, than he has done in a letter which shall be given here, because it makes no less the eulogium of his character, than of his sacred songs.

“ How great is your modesty, my dear Gellert, to consider the approbation I bestow on your sacred songs, as part of your reward for your labour in writing them ! This approbation is entirely your due, and none of your readers can refuse it to you, unless they have the misfortune to be the enemies of talents and religion. Till now I have considered you as my best friend, I loved you tenderly and sincerely ; I did not believe my esteem for you was susceptible of increase ; I can, however, assure you that it is greatly augmented. You have always appeared to me highly deserving of affection, but now I consider you as a being worthy of reverence. I use this epithet in its most enlarged acceptation, in the sense formerly attached to it, before it was thrown away on so many who do not deserve it. Doubt not for an instant of your sacred songs doing good. Known so advantageously as you are, you have doubly reason to hope it ; as so many other proofs of your talents justly prejudice in your favour, a public who expect nothing from your pen but accomplished productions, dictated by virtue, and calculated to inspire it. How greatly will the public esteem for your writings contribute to the

progress of our holy religion ! Your fables and your moral poems have prepared the minds of your readers, to admit the sublime ideas they will find in your sacred songs. The partisans of religion will make use of them, to confound those light minded men, who imagine that genius can only be applied to works of vain amusement. And those who think thus, will learn to love the truths which are presented to them, under an aspect so attractive. Such, my dear Gellert, are the happy effects they must produce on those who read your works without knowing you otherwise: What, then, will be their effect on those who have, by personal acquaintance with you, been enabled to read in your soul ! I have often told you, I value your excellent heart still more than your understanding ; and if I had never told you so, the perusal of your sacred songs would have drawn from me this avowal. It is impossible you should have written so well, and in so persuasive a manner, if you were not yourself fully convinced of these divine truths. I believe a penetrating eye always discovers the most artful hypocrite, under whatever mask he may try to conceal himself. V. knows how to set forth in his verses the finest maxims to edify humanity and virtue, and pompously to introduce religion on the scene ; he succeeds in pleasing ; but can he ever edify ? No ! his indecency, his avarice, and his odious levity, make us suspect

his morality, his religion, and his maxims of virtue. Struck with the contrast between his writings and his principles, is it possible to approve such a man ; seeing, on one side, so much elevation, and, on the other, so much to call forth our contempt ?

“ How grave you have made me, my dear Gellert; and, nevertheless, I feel a pleasure in conversing with you thus, very superior to any I have enjoyed in writing to you the gayest and most playful letters. What an excellent friend you are ! I now feel the full value of your friendship. I dare say things to you, that I should not venture to say to any one else, because they would appear too much like flattery ; but you, my honest Gellert, you know your Rübener, who does not like to offend, but who still more avoids flattery, and when I say, that you have my suffrage as to the edification your readers will receive, and that they will be convinced of the beauty of your soul, I express a truth, which friendship and feeling require me to own.

“ You wish to know whether I approve your resolution of not writing any more. I will not yet explain myself on that subject : In the mean time, I own a hope that your project of retiring into the country is but a vague idea. Do not abandon your post, so long as you have strength to cultivate the heart and understanding of youth. You can never

be without the necessaries of life, and if God grants peace to our country, things will be so settled in the university, that you will have a more decent revenue.

“ That I may terminate this letter with the same serenity I began it, I will say nothing of our present circumstances. When shall I see you again, and when shall we enjoy the sweets of a calm and undisturbed conversation? Let the friend of mankind, the sensible, the pious Gellert, here receive my adieus. I embrace him, and thank heaven for having bestowed on me the gift of such a friend.”

Such were the impressions made by Gellert's sacred songs on the mind of his friends; and they were equally prized by all those who were attached to religion, in both the protestant churches. Even amongst the Roman catholics, many ecclesiastics valued them as they deserved. In the heart of Bohemia, where it could hardly be expected that the good modern authors should be read, a pious country curate was so much affected by these sacred songs, that he not only wrote to the author to testify his admiration of them, but even endeavoured to persuade him to embrace the Roman catholic religion, from an idea that Gellert could not but think more justly on the necessity of good works than Luther; of whose doctrine, he, probably, knew only what Belarmin, or other controvertial writers, have said of it.

Our poet took occasion from that, without, however, erecting himself into a maker of converts, to give this honest man a more just idea of Luther's principles. One of the most noble and illustrious houses of Milan, gave him also, by means of an ecclesiastic, certainly more free from prejudices than the Bohemian, the most touching assurances of the edification with which his sacred songs were read in their family, and of the esteem with which all his works, but especially these, had inspired them for the author.

As virtue and true piety cannot be dangerous in any state, whatever constitutions and laws the reigning religion may have established, Gellert's writings were excepted, in catholic countries, from the prohibition to read books written by those they call heretics. At Vienna, where, at that time, much rigour was observed on this point, in visiting the baggage of a young man of quality, Gellert's sacred songs, which he used for his edification in his travels, were found. He dreaded not being permitted to keep them; but Baron San Swieten reassured our traveller, and said to him, "These writings are not comprehended in our prohibition; we all, here, admire the works of Gellert!"

Twelve years of Gellert's life were spent in writing these works, so useful to the public, and so honourable to himself. Useful, however, as these writings were to the Germans, they may be said to

be merely the occupations of his leisure hours, for he devoted the greatest part of his time to the instruction and improvement of the academical youth. He taught belles lettres to his disciples, explained to them the rules of poetry and eloquence, exercised them in composing according to these rules, and formed their stile and their taste, by habituating them to write with perspicuity, and to give an easy natural air to their productions. These lessons were universally admired; scholars of every rank, especially the young nobility, of various countries, who studied at Leipfick, ran eagerly to hear Gellert. He would not seek to obtain any public employment; on one hand, because he feared not being able to discharge its functions properly, and, on the other, because his modesty made him believe he had no greater claim than others to the favour of the court. Rewards seldom go to meet merit, much less do they seek it, and the reason is plain, the great seldom grant their protection but from vanity, and to obtain dependants, or from interest to procure creatures to themselves. Gellert, therefore, had nothing to expect from them: He would not live in dependance, and he could not be useful to the great. His reputation, however, reached the court, and excited some attention there. The services he did the academy, became known there; and it was even wished that he would solicit the

charge of professor extraordinary in philosophy. His friends, particularly Rübener and Wagner, determined him to this, and having obtained this employment, with a pension, in 1751, he began to give public lessons in poetry and eloquence to a very numerous audience. These instructions seemed to tend only to enlighten and adorn the understanding; but, both in his lessons, and in the familiar conversations he held with his disciples, he knew how to form their hearts, and inspire them no less with the love of virtue, than of the sciences. All the young people who frequented the colleges, and were otherwise acquainted with him, for they had all free access to him, loved him, and were deeply affected by the zeal with which he applied himself to make them more able, and, at the same time, more virtuous and amiable. All were ambitious of his esteem; and that alone was sufficient to keep them within bounds, and preserve them from libertinism. They found, in the same man, their friend and instructor; and his advice made so much the deeper impression on them, inasmuch, as, whilst with all the marks of the tenderest interest, he recommended to them piety and virtue, as the true road to happiness, his own example, and the purity of his manners, added the greatest weight to his exhortations.

Gellert never failed to prepare himself for giving

his lessons, however familiar the subjects he meant to treat on might be ; for no one could have a more modest opinion, and be more mistrustful of his memory and his talents than he himself was. He meditated before hand, not only on the things he had to say, but even on the expressions he should make use of ; and, in order to make himself more and more useful to his disciples, he applied, indefatigably, as much to the improvement of his stile, as to extending the sphere of his knowledge. What distinguished his mode of teaching was, not only the order and the perspicuity with which he taught, but something graceful and insinuating in his manner, joined to a peculiar attention to speaking naturally, and entirely without affectation. He permitted himself no useless digressions, no praises of his own method, no satirical sallies against the other professors, none of those little artifices, sometimes made use of in the universities, to amuse the audience, and to attract the crowd. Thus, his lessons were not only a school of science, but also of virtue, and of that modesty which equally embellished virtue and science. He knew how to adapt himself to the different capacities of his disciples, who exercised themselves under his direction, in writing and composition ; and he so wisely tempered his praises and his criticisms, that, on one hand, he never discouraged, by too much severity, those of slender capacity ; nor, on the other, spoiled

those who had superior talents, by excessive praises, which would have rendered them presumptuous and negligent. The greater their progress, the more he required of them ; and he endeavoured always to preserve in their minds, a modest and useful mistrust of themselves. It was with this view, that, speaking of his own works, he owned that he found many things to correct, with which he had formerly been very well satisfied. He went so far as to point out to them the faults which had escaped him, in order to teach them, by the severity with which he judged himself, not to be easily satisfied with their own writings, or to have too high an opinion of them.

In these details, we have not consulted the partiality of friendship, but pure truth ; of this, no one can be ignorant who knew Gellert ; and as to the views he proposed to himself, they are clearly indicated, in the little discourses he was in the habit of addressing to his disciples, on beginning and ending his lessons. For example, on the opening one of his lectures on eloquence and poetry, he thus expresses himself, " However necessary the rules of these two arts may be, it is certain they cannot bestow the talent of thinking justly, and writing well. They are laws, of which it is not allowable to be ignorant, but of which we must make a just and prudent application ; and which, like civil laws, must, in certain

cases, be extended, modified, and often violated. It is very possible to know, and to follow in writing, the rules of eloquence, whether in prose or poetry, and, nevertheless, to write very ill; frequently the worse, the more scrupulously we think to conform ourselves to these rules. Observing them, therefore, is not the only thing necessary; the essential requisite, is to know if we have attained the end we ought to propose to ourselves, in such works, the beautiful and the good, the useful and the agreeable, the energetic and the pathetic. This cannot be decided at the tribunal of rules, but at that of taste and sentiment. In this we must exercise ourselves from early youth, if we wish to write well. It is to animate you to this, to serve you for a guide to it, gentlemen, that I am called. I offer you my directions; and the works which you may submit to my criticism, I promise you to examine with care, and to judge with candour and modesty. Entrust me with your productions; let them be in prose or in verse, letters, characters, dissertations, discourses, or poems. I engage myself to read them, in this audience, if they seem to me to deserve it, and to accompany them with critical observations on their plan and on its execution, and to point out the beauties and the faults I discover in them; but I will never name the author, without his permission. If the writing does not appear

to me sufficiently good to be read publicly, I will give my opinion of it to its author in private ; for it is not my intention to humiliate any one whatever, but to give useful advice. I do not mean to exclude lively and playful writings ; for, I flatter myself, that none will ever be presented to me that breathe a spirit of libertinism, or that may be hurtful to morals. I also propose to myself to read with you, from time to time, some select pieces, composed by ancient or modern authors ; for nothing so much exercises and forms the taste and understanding, as to analyse the beauties of great writers. Sometimes, in order to inspire you with disgust for bad or indifferent writing, I will read to you some such compositions, and criticise them rationally. At the same time, gentlemen, do not suppose that I wish to excite you to become authors ; you need not fear any temptation to this from me. An author ought to possess genius, a ripe judgment, and learning ; he who possesses these qualities, need not be excited to write, and whoever has them not, will never be a good writer. A violent passion for verse-making often assails us in our youth ; but, in order to cure those geniuses not much favoured by nature, I will tell you what qualities Aristotle, Horace, Vida, and Boileau require in a good poem. When you are

well informed on this point, you certainly will feel no temptation to become indifferent poets."

Another discourse with which Gellert terminated his lessons on the rules of poetry, does no less honour to his knowledge and sentiments. "How happy should I think myself," said he, "if the pains I have taken do not prove wholly fruitless, and if I have made you sensible how much I have wished to be useful to you! I have endeavoured to shew you what poetry is, to characterise its different species, and to mark their different tones and colourings; in a word, by rules and examples, I have applied myself to instruct you, both in poetical objects, and in poetical stile. I own that these will not make you poets; but if nature has given you a poetical genius, the rules by which it should be regulated cannot be useless: they will direct your talent, and the examples will complete your instruction. Even those who are not destined, shall I say, to the happiness, or the misfortune of being poets? may, nevertheless, profit by the lessons I have given you in another manner. Without being themselves capable of writing poetry, they will be enabled to read with taste and advantage the poems of others; they will become connoisseurs, and the judges of poets. It is not true that we cannot praise or criticise a thing, without being ourselves able to do it better. Moreover, the knowledge of poetry and of its rules,

will be useful to you in eloquence; for these two arts are nearly connected with one another. I have particularly made it my study to inspire you with the noble and praise-worthy desire of being judges and critics. I have set you the example, by judging my own works with severity as well as yours. Read with care and feeling the best ancient and modern poets. Do not be in haste to compose yourselves. Consult your powers. Apply yourselves to direct your genius by a severe judgment, and to regulate the fire of your imaginations. Consult connoisseurs; submit your productions to their criticisms, and profit by their advice and corrections. Do not overlook any thing in yourselves; judge yourselves impartially; fear not labour, and think, for your encouragement, of the prize reserved for the poet,—the esteem of many ages; a prize too glorious to be obtained by weak and languid efforts. An infallible means of pleasing, is to extend and improve men's ideas, to choose objects which may touch and interest them, which move and enlighten them, to make them sensible of truths, and to put them in action; in a word, we succeed in pleasing when we know how to occupy the head and the heart at the same time. The poet should, therefore, enlighten his own understanding more and more, and awaken more the love of virtue in his heart. To inspire a taste for what is good and beau-

tiful, is the end he should have in view. Let him always associate the useful with the agreeable, and he may be certain of pleasing, as long as men are men. Let your verses be hymns in honour of reason, of virtue, and of religion, and your verses, if they are otherwise good, will certainly be applauded. On this condition, gentlemen, I dare, in the name of future ages, promise you glory and immortality. If you spread an air of cheerfulness over your poems, let even your playfulness be instructive, or, at least, innocent; and let the sallies of your wit be always under the controul of decency and morality. If you allow yourselves in raillery, let folly and absurdity be ever the objects of your pleasantry; but never wound your neighbour's honour; never wound truth, which ought to make men wise and happy; and, still less, that truth which we have received from our Redeemer, I mean religion. How many poets have there been, who have abused their wit and their talents by turning virtue, and every thing respectable, to ridicule! Horrible deviation! as if it were necessary to be a libertine and wicked, as if it were necessary to forget our Creator and Redeemer, to be a great writer! A poet who has to reproach himself with having seduced an innocent heart by the charms of his poetry; a poet, whose impious and licentious verses continue to corrupt his readers long after his death,

and, perhaps, during many ages—is not this wretch a thousand times more criminal than he, who by steel or poison, attempts men's lives? Honour and glorify God by your poetry, I conjure you, gentlemen, as my friends and brothers; honour him, by contributing to extend the dominion of wisdom and virtue among men. Exalt and glorify his majesty by your writings, penetrating your minds with the idea of the supreme being, and you will, at the same time, fill your understandings and your hearts with the noblest and sublimest thoughts and sentiments. If you devote yourselves to theology, contribute to procure, for the use of the church, good spiritual songs, and reflect, that one single hymn may kindle the fire of religion and piety in many hearts."

Thus Gellert instructed his disciples; but, in the midst of these honourable labours, a terrible hypochondriac affection, made his life a continual series of suffering. He was tormented with this malady from the year 1752, especially during summer. He, nevertheless, observed the strictest diet, ever attentive both as to the quality and quantity of his food, and very exact in taking exercise; this, however, could not prevent his days from being melancholy and painful, and his nights agitated by watchfulness, or by frightful dreams. Sleep generally weakened, rather than refreshed him. He was conti-

nually distressed with oppressions on his lungs ; and the powers of his mind became languid, owing to the continual sufferings and uneasiness of his body. He very seldom felt that vivacity and cheerfulness which is a natural sign of a free circulation of the blood and humours. An extraordinary melancholy, and insurmountable langour, the effects of his cruel malady, darkened his soul. It seemed to him, sometimes, that his memory only served to recal to his mind and make present to him, whatever disagreeable circumstances might have occurred in his past life. Though he had constantly recourse to reason and to religion, to get the better of his imagination, it, nevertheless, was continually presenting him with black and melancholy images, and exciting in his mind ideas which he abhorred. All those truths, on which he formerly dwelt with so much pleasure, appeared to have lost, to him, all their charms and sweetness. When we possess ourselves, we wrestle, if I may so say, with our sufferings, and strive to support our distresses with firmness. Gellert endeavoured, therefore, to guard himself from all impatience, he frequently occupied himself in religious meditations, he did not allow any interruption in his pious exercises ; but he grieved that his weakness would not allow him to correct certain absences of mind, which hindered him from collecting his ideas as he would have wished, in his

hours of retirement, and from acquitting himself of those duties with as much taste and pleasure as he did formerly.

The medical art, and the assistance of physicians, seldom afforded him any diminution of his sufferings. The baths of Lauchstadt, and of Carlsbad, which he used two following years, 1753 and 1754, procured him, it is true, some relief, but had not all the effect he had promised himself. He thus expresses himself on his second journey, " My stay at Carlsbad, whither Dr Tilling, of Annaberg, accompanied me, was not at all agreeable. I had hardly been there a few days, when I wished to leave it. The worthy Dr Tilling, testified much friendship towards me, and nothing could exceed his attentions. May God reward him! and blessed be that benevolent God, who preserved me during my journey, and maintained me, at least, in a supportable state of health." Gellert called his health supportable, because he was not obliged to keep his bed, though, at the same time, his depressions and his sufferings were proof against every effort of medicine, and made him insensible to all the comforts of life. Neither change of air, taken in his little journies, nor exercise, in general so salutary to the health, nor the suspension of his ordinary labours, nor the new acquaintances he made, and the connections he formed, with men distinguished by

their rank and their amiable qualities, the tenderness and unremitting attentions of his intimate friends, nothing of all this, however sensible he might be to so many marks of esteem and attachment, could dissipate that involuntary melancholy, into which his soul was plunged, nor restore him even to a part of his former cheerfulness. He thought himself too happy, when his sufferings allowed him some respite now and then, and that some lucid hours revived him a little, after whole weeks and months of gloomy melancholy.

These sufferings, so seldom interrupted, were so much the more distressing to him, as religion seemed to refuse him those aids and consolations, which he never ceased seeking, in the meditation on the truths of christianity, and in the constant exercise of prayer. The more his sufferings encreased, the more he applied himself, even to a scrupulous degree, to prevent the bad influence they might have on his piety, on his patience, on his resignation to the will of God, and on his zeal in acquitting himself of all his different duties. He watched, therefore, without ceasing over his thoughts, and every emotion of his heart ; attentive to all his discourse, to all his actions, that nothing might escape him, to occasion himself reproach ; ever watchful against that excessive sensibility, so natural to valetudinarians, that his society, might not become irksome to his friends,

or to his disciples, whom he continually laboured to instruct and improve.

Unable to master that inveterate sadness, arising merely from the bad state of his health, and which obscured his soul in spite of all his endeavours, he determined that, at least, no one should suffer from it but himself. The sweet and affectionate character which was natural to him, displayed itself in his physiognomy, in his languid and melancholy looks, and in the whole air of his countenance. To love him, it was only necessary to see him, and whoever had seen him, could no longer doubt whether he deserved to be loved. That virtue could never be sufficiently admired, which so immediately captivated every heart; and the universal benevolence with which he was animated, and that desire of giving pleasure to every one around him, piercing through the cloud, which the sense of his sufferings spread over his outward appearance, was inexpressibly touching.

But nothing could equal his gratitude to those of his friends, who endeavoured to encourage and support him in his troubles. His journal gives an affecting proof of this; in which he used to transcribe the names of these kind friends, blessing God for having bestowed them on him, and beseeching him to reward them. When his complaints allowed him some hours of respite, he gave himself up,

with inexpressible ardour, to pious exercises; he endeavoured to exalt his devotion and gratitude for the goodness of God, particularly for the great benefit of redemption. Whatever he suffered from the attacks of melancholy, they never hindered him from attending both public and private worship, or from acquitting himself of all the duties of his vocation.

He made every possible effort to banish the distractions which sometimes, in spite of himself, disturbed his pious exercises, persuaded that these distractions, innocent, without doubt, when absolutely involuntary, become criminal whenever we do not strive against them as much as possible. His attention to his health was scrupulous, and he never deviated from the rules he had laid down to himself on this subject, that he might, at least, not have to reproach himself with being the cause of augmenting his sufferings by his own negligence. He had acquired a habit of studying till midnight; but he abstained from it the moment he perceived that it heated his imagination, and often occasioned him distressing dreams. Nothing could exceed the continual efforts he made to improve, more and more, in Christian humility: He acknowledged, with regret, that he was naturally inclined to vanity, and applied himself with all his power to stifle its emotions in their birth. The good he did, he wished

to do merely from the love of goodness, and he dreaded nothing so much as the self-reproach of having performed his duties, more from a desire of applause, than from an inward sentiment of the obligation he was under to perform them. If in the state of suffering, which was become habitual to him, he laboured sincerely to improve himself, he applied with no less zeal to the improvement of others; and never did he experience more joy than when he had reason to believe his efforts were not in vain. He, especially, had the tenderest compassion for young men who were drawn into libertinism, and laboured, with almost paternal sollicitude, to reclaim them from their errors, or to preserve in the path of virtue those who were in danger of allowing themselves to be seduced from it.

The sweet satisfaction of finding these endeavours sometimes successful; the tender attachment of friends, of all ranks and conditions; the confidence reposed in him by so many parents, who thought they could do nothing better for their children than to give them up to his direction; the respect and gratitude of the young people whom he had instructed, and conducted in the ways of virtue; finally, the letters he received from different countries, and which informed him of the success of his writings, and the good which they did, by the blessing of God; these were all so many

rewards and consolations, which encouraged him to suffer with patience and serenity, and to continue his useful labours, notwithstanding the deplorable state of his health. It often happened to him, that Providence, in which he trusted and had always before his eyes, procured him assistance and subjects of rejoicing, entirely unexpected. Men of letters, when piety and virtue breathe through their writings, become useful to others, unknowingly to themselves ; and their merit frequently makes the deepest impressions on noble and generous hearts, leading them to perform the brightest acts of benevolence and gratitude. Gellert often experienced this touching effect from his works. We have already mentioned a very considerable pension offered him by a Silesian gentleman, (the baron de Crauffen) and when declined by Gellert for himself, bestowed, by this generous friend, on Gellert's mother, and continued to her till her death, a benefaction which her son considered as one of the greatest felicities of his life.

The examples of such goodness of heart, are certainly rare ; what is no less so, is the gratitude testified to Gellert by a Prussian officer, in a manner as unexpected as agreeable. The writings of our author had deeply touched this young man ; he was indebted to them for his return to virtue and religion ; and he had long wished to testify his grati-

tude. Full of these sentiments, and being at Leipzig, whither he had come to receive an inheritance of five or six thousand crowns, he sought to make acquaintance with Gellert. They met twice, at the house of a common friend. At their third meeting, chance occasioned their being left together alone for a few minutes. "O Sir," said the officer, with an effusion of heart, accompanied by an interesting embarrassment, "you know not that I am your debtor! Yes, most truly, I owe you much, and I entreat of you to accept this mark of my gratitude; but, above all, do not give me any thanks." "At the same time," adds Gellert, who relates this adventure to his friend Count Maurice de Bruhl, "he slid into my hand a paper containing money. You, Sir, my debtor, you, whom I never saw till lately, and to whom I never had the opportunity of doing any service!" "O do not refuse me—accept, for heaven's sake, accept. Your writings have made me more virtuous, they have reformed my principles, an advantage more precious than if I had gained the whole world. O! your friend is returning, I beseech you, resist no longer, he must not witness this, and see my agitation." "I received the present," continues Gellert, "and I was so much moved, and so much affected, that I could not make any answer. On my return home, I experienced a fresh emotion; for, on opening the paper, I found it

contained twenty louis-d'ors. This emotion was not produced by the sight of the gold—no, most assuredly, gold cannot excite a sentiment of joy equal to what I experienced ; it penetrates not to the soul. No, my dear count, a confused idea, which I hardly dared admit into my mind, (because the Supreme Being was present to my thoughts) the idea of my not being wholly useless to the world, a consoling voice, which inwardly bade me take courage, and seemed to tell me, that my life was not destined to be always spent in melancholy and despondency : —this is what gave me so much emotion. Thou art still possessed of sensibility, said I to myself ! It is not then impossible for thee to be deeply affected ! Thou wouldst willingly, in thy turn, give this gold to some honest man, provided thou couldst always preserve the impression made on thee by this event. There is nothing, continued I, with a gentle tremor, there is nothing, be it ever so little, which is not under the empire of Divine Providence. May I not flatter myself, it may have directed all this for my comfort ? O ! how great is the happiness I enjoy, in having improved the virtue of one of my brethren ! I drew near the window and looked towards heaven—But we sometimes experience certain emotions, which we neither can, nor ought to entrust, even to our most intimate friends ; the moment we allow ourselves to express them, it is to

be feared, some little vanity may creep into our hearts. It is enough if I tell you, my dear count, that it was a happy evening for me, for which I cannot too much bless God. My beneficent friend desired me not to mention what passed between us. No one shall know it but you and my sister. This young man had cured himself of some prejudice he had conceived against religion, merely by reading some good authors. He is now an estimable officer, very regular in his conduct, and truly virtuous. There are, however, some traces of melancholy in his countenance, but in him they are not unbecoming. He will die a soldier, because he has well informed himself in the duties of his profession."

Nothing could be better timed for Gellert than this adventure. The attacks of his grievous malady, were become more distressing than common; his melancholy became daily more and more profound, and his hours of cheerfulness and tranquillity less frequent. But this fortunate event, by reanimating his sentiments of gratitude to God, spread over his soul a serene joy, which for some time proved favourable to his health. It is true, his sufferings too soon returned with fresh violence; however, such comforts as that he had just experienced, did not fail to revive his distressed spirits, and to second the efforts he continually made to excite himself to patience, and confidence in God. It

was also with this view, that he frequently occupied himself with the grand ideas of eternity. In his solitary walks, whether in the country or amongst the tombs, he chiefly proposed to himself, to gain courage and awaken his mind to resignation, by meditating on the shortness of a life so painful and melancholy, and on the near approach of death, which terminates all our sufferings here below, and delivers virtue from all the combats it is called to maintain in this world.

We have already said, that Gellert seized every possible occasion of inspiring others with the noble sentiment with which he himself was animated. "Take care" he writes to a friend of his, "that the tumult of a court does not stifle in you the voice of truth and virtue. I know how difficult it is to overcome the innumerable temptations of ambition and voluptuousness; strength and courage are certainly necessary to succeed in so doing; but I know to whom I speak, and am acquainted with all the greatness of your heart and mind. Consider, my dear count, how glorious will be your victory, if in the midst of a court, and at the age most under the dominion of the passions, you resist the fallacious charms of voluptuousness, and the deceitful promises of ambition. When, after having listened to the voice of wisdom and your own conscience, you have so nobly triumphed, you will taste the purest joy; satisfied

with yourself, you will bless the faithful friend who will have dared to set your duties before you, and animate you to the performance of them. There exist in the world, despicable beings, who become our flatterers, to make us wretched. There exist vile men, who cannot endure that we should elevate ourselves above them, by real merit, and who have recourse to a thousand artifices to lower us, by making us share in their irregularities and ignominy. But, what am I saying? Pardon the sentiment which inspires me with this spirit of moralizing. It would be offensive, if it were not dictated by friendship; but it is merely the effusion of a heart which esteems you, which loves you, and which wishes to love and admire you through eternity."

Gellert was naturally more sensible, than he would have wished, to the praises and criticisms of which he was the object, and often complained to his friends, of this extreme susceptibility. There is no author, whatever pains he may take to bring his works to perfection, however pure and excellent may be his intentions, that can hope to be sheltered from the shafts of a malignant criticism. There exist, every where, enemies to real merit, who busy themselves, not only to depreciate good productions, but to throw a suspicion on the moral character of the author. This has been the fate of Gellert du-

ring his life, as well as after his death. In some publication, I know not what, the author dared to attack him, not only on his works, but on the purity of his intentions and views. To an outrage of this nature, he could not but be very sensible, but he bore it with patience, though he owned, that it was not without difficulty that he triumphed over his resentment. "I will," says he, in his Journal, "consider this satire, as if it did not exist; let them outrage and criticise me as they will, I shall, assuredly, be grieved at it, but I will never reply. My readers must decide on the rank I deserve to hold amongst authors." In another letter, dated, 1755, he says, speaking of this same pamphlet, "People pretend that it is written by the Baron de ———. How can I have offended that man? Certainly, he cannot know me, if he treats me in so outrageous a manner. I would not act thus by the most despicable of human creatures. To defame a man, to try to make him odious to his contemporaries, and to posterity. Oh! it is horrible! my heart bleeds when I think of it. Why did I not rather remain in obscurity? But, you will say, we ought to be resigned and patient. I allow it; but it is very difficult to be so, and would cease to be a virtue were it not. When I wish, with the psalmist, not to become an object of derision to my enemies, I endeavour to think, that even our enemy may be useful

to us, and ought to make us wife." There are some authors, who, attacked as Gellert was, keep silence, because they despise their adversary; Gellert kept silence, without being insensible to the outrage, because he thought himself called upon, on this occasion, to the exercise of patience and humility.

The calamities of war, which, ever since 1757, had desolated Germany, and other neighbouring states, determined Gellert to withdraw himself, for some time, from Leipfick. He wished, besides, to try if a prolonged residence in the country, might not, in some degree, mitigate his sufferings, by intermitting those labours, which had, for many years, kept his mind constantly on the stretch. He went to Bonan, to the house of M. le Chambellan de Zettwitz, that he might enjoy the company of that gentleman and his wife, and that of M. le Comte de Vitzhum, and his family. These persons, much distinguished by their birth and merit, had long honoured him with a friendship, which did credit to themselves, and which he considered as one of the greatest benefits bestowed on him by Providence. He had been only a short time with these friends, when the approach of the armies obliged him to accompany them to Eisenberg. Returning from thence, with them, to Bonan, he caught cold, in a walk he took pretty late in the evening, at Meineweh,

a place belonging to M. de Schönberg, whom he reckoned amongst his dearest friends.

A violent pleurisy was the consequence of this cold, and the fever attending it increased to such a degree, that both himself and his friends began to fear for his life. He was destined, however, to be yet longer useful to the world, and recovered, contrary to all expectation. This mercy of Providence, the tender care of the generous family, in the bosom of which he was attacked by this illness, the assiduity of Doctor Springfield, physician at Weiffensels, the attention of the Prussian commander of this town, who ordered a free passage to be allowed to every messenger who came there to seek assistance for the interesting Gellert, the eagerness with which his friends from Leipzick came to see him, all these circumstances, penetrated his heart with the liveliest gratitude.

He mentioned few of the events of his life with so much emotion as this deliverance: "O how solemn and formidable is the first step towards eternity!" says Gellert, in a letter to Count Maurice de Bruhl. "What a difference between the ideas we form to ourselves of death, when in the enjoyment of good health, and those which possess our minds on the borders of the grave! Where is the hero who does not tremble in this terrible moment, unless religion, like an angel from heaven, comes

to strengthen him? I expected to die; yet, by the goodness of God, I still live! O how can I, in a manner sufficiently useful, employ this second life bestowed on me! But how long will it continue; and, suppose it should be much longer, will it not run on with the same rapidity as my preceding years?" It was with these sentiments that Gellert received again his life, which he had already offered a sacrifice to the will of God. But, a constitution, such as his, already tired by so much suffering, could recover but slowly from such an attack, and was never entirely re-established. His usual hypochondriac complaints, returned with his health; and, as he did not seem likely to receive much relief from a longer stay in the country, he determined to return to Leipstick, in order to resume his usual occupations.

Some months after his return, he received the melancholy news of the death of one of his dearest friends, the Baron de Cronegk. This loss was the more afflicting to him, as he had conceived the most sanguine hopes of the good this young man might do in the world, not only by his rare talents, but also by his piety and his virtues. "Cronegk," writes he, to Count M. de Bruhl, "our dear Cronegk, was taken from us the first day of this year. Probably, my separation from him will not be long; nevertheless, this loss entirely overcomes

me. On the first news of his decease, in tears, I threw myself, on that bed, in which I myself, not long ago, lay, expecting my last hour *. This excellent young man died of the small-pox. He was travelling when attacked by this malady, which, on the ninth day, laid him in the grave. He foresaw his end ; and expected it with firmness. A few days before his death, he wrote to several of his friends at Anspach, and made his own testamentary dispositions, in which I admire him as much as in any of his other works. In consequence of these arrangements, his library will be divided into three parts. His first governor, the chaplain Rabe, will have one ; the poet Utz, another ; and the third is destined to the relief of some poor people. His own servant will have a hundred crowns. He has left me, as a token of remembrance, his portrait and his ring. This portrait of a friend full of genius and piety, is now before me, and must, alas, hence forward, supply to me, the place of the most amiable of men. His last words were, *O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory ! Grace be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ !* He now enjoys immortality, and the love of that God whom he adores. We, my dear Count, look towards heaven ; we follow him with

* Gellert wrote this at Bonan, whither he was returned, to spend some time.

our eyes, and we walk after him in that career which he has so gloriously terminated." Gellert, who knew that piety and virtue never gain more credit in the eyes of men, nor ever are more useful to the world, than when they are seen to shine in persons of distinguished rank, never spoke of his friend Cronegk, but with the liveliest interest and emotion. Even in his lessons, he proposed him as an example to the students of quality, in order, that examples chosen in their own line of life, might excite them to give fresh splendour to the privileges of nobility, by associating with them virtue and piety, without which, they can have no real value.

Thus, Gellert, made use of every means to augment the moral utility of his lessons, which drew to Leipfick, notwithstanding the disturbances of war, a very considerable number of gentlemen, from various nations, but, particularly, from the northern kingdoms. From this time, he particularly attached himself to teaching the *belles lettres* : many discourses addressed to his auditors, and which are found in his works, prove the pains he took to make this kind of instruction as susceptible of morality as the nature of it will admit.

Though he had already explained to his pupils several excellent systems of morality, they did not entirely answer his views, and he determined to compose some moral lessons. The public, it is true,

wished him to continue to write in the line of poetry, and obligingly reproached him with neglecting it, but he no longer thought himself possessed of poetical taste or talents. "My fancy forsakes me;" says he, writing to Count M. de Bruhl; "it is a hint to me no longer to compose verses. Let me, therefore, not be reproached with my inaction in this particular. Say, in my behalf, that no one is obliged to make verses when he finds himself no longer capable; that there is a kind of merit in giving over in time, and, as Pope says, 'not pressing our genius to the very dregs.' As for me, my dear Count, I find every day that my imagination cools, and I become more and more incapable of application. What was formerly agreeable to me, is become indifferent, and what was easy, is become painful. However, let me guard against complaining. God is the master of our destiny; the duty of man is, humbly to submit, even to those things which appear to him the most insupportable. Our lot is always better than we have deserved; often, it is only our pride and our vanity which suffers from it; our true happiness loses nothing by it." These were his prevailing sentiments when he set about composing his course of morality. The applauses he obtained, and the concurrence of disciples eager to gather from the lips of this amiable Mentor, lessons of practical wisdom, so far surpassed his

expectations, that this part of the functions attached to his post, became one of the most agreeable occupations. The merit of these lessons is so universally acknowledged, that, if any one were to take on themselves to contest it, they would offend all well disposed minds. Academical instructions on morality certainly ought not to have the appearance of sermons; but method may be observed in them, without giving them too much of a formal air; and, without the appearance of being too deep, it is possible to teach the principles by which to lead a good life. Is it necessary to engage in a learned dissection of the human heart, to give man the information essential to his happiness, concerning his nature, his relations, and his duties, and lead him justly to appreciate his obligations, and become sufficiently acquainted with the rules of wisdom, which he ought to follow? Superfluous ornaments would be highly improper in lessons of morality; but they may be given in an agreeable and graceful manner, which, so far from diminishing, cannot fail to encrease their effect. Gellert was, especially, an excellent moralist for young people of distinction; because he attached himself, in his lessons, much more to useful subjects, requisite to be known to all men, and to be constantly present to their minds, than to new and extraordinary ideas; because, in treating points of morality, which are easily comprehended, but

difficult in practice, he knew how to give them a charm, calculated to fix the attention of his auditors ; because he taught morals philosophically, it is true, but, at the same time, so improved in the school of Christianity, as to be more luminous, and acquire more empire over the heart ; finally, because, in expressing the most affecting gratitude towards religion, he pointed it out as the faithful guide through the paths of life.

This new service done to the young academicians, added much to his celebrity ; the merit of his writings had been its foundation ; the zeal and talents, which made him a model for instructors, supported and augmented it. Few learned academies can boast of so numerous an audience as Gellert. It often consisted of four hundred persons, and sometimes more. But, it was not only in public that he made himself useful ; he was so also in his familiar discourses with his disciples. His door was never shut to them ; each of them had as free an access to him, as if he alone had been admitted to enjoy this favour. In these conversations, Gellert never assumed the air of a master, he conversed with these young people as with his friends ; he listened to them, he studied their character, he spoke little, but all that he said was on mature reflection ; in a word, his very silence was expressive, and calculated to instruct ; and, perhaps, the professor's

society was not less advantageous to his disciples, than even his lessons. He had such an ascendancy over the academical youth, and was so highly respected by them, that they abstained from libertinism and vice, only that they might not be deprived of the honour of being received at Gellert's, and of being noticed by him.

His works were eagerly read, both at Leipstick, and elsewhere, and inspired his readers, of both sexes, with the desire of having him their friend, their adviser, their master, and the judge of their literary productions. This universal confidence engaged him in a very extensive correspondence, which often became burthensome to him, from the weak state of his health, but from which he would not withdraw himself, as it furnished him with the means of being useful to his correspondents. Those who wished to find a good governor for their sons, were desirous of getting one recommended by Gellert. He was the more circumspect in giving such recommendations, as he well knew how easy it was to be mistaken in them, even with the very best intentions. He was most particularly attentive to the moral character of those he ventured to recommend. He also took great pains to form good tutors himself; he not only treated on their duties, at certain hours, in public lessons, but he took pleasure in

giving them his directions and opinions, both in his closet, and by letters.

From the beginning of the war, there had been at Leipfick a continual flux and reflux of foreigners, on account of the various armies which either passed through, or defended Saxony. These foreigners, knew Gellert by his works, and he was as much beloved and respected by them, as he could be by his own countrymen. Though, in the tumult of arms, little attention can be paid to literary talents, he, nevertheless, received visits from all who were attached to religion and letters, or who wished, for the credit of having seen and heard that man, who was a greater favourite with his nation than any other author. It was not unusual to see as many officers amongst his auditors, as if his apartment had been the anti-chamber of a general. The princes Charles and Henry of Prussia, did him the honour to converse with him. He spoke with the greatest respect and admiration of the goodness and humanity of these princes, who neglected no means of sparing every distress to Saxony which could be avoided, or of softening as much as possible, those which were absolutely unavoidable. "Prince Henry" writes Gellert, in a letter to one of his friends, "desired to see me, and I had an audience of him yesterday. I went to him with pleasure, and, I must own, quitted him with re-

gret. I thanked him with a lively sentiment of gratitude, in the name of my country, for all he has done to ease us of the burden of war. This seemed to please him. ‘Have you nothing’ said he, ‘to desire for yourself? I should be happy in having an opportunity of obliging you’—No, my lord, all I dare request of your highness, is, to continue to us your protection.—‘But could not I do any service to some of your relations or friends?’—During the whole war, my lord, you have never ceased doing good to me and my friends?” This great prince esteemed Gellert very much, and gave him a fresh proof of this after the war, for he presented him, through M. de Kalkreuter, with the horse he himself rode at the battle of Freyberg. Every one knew what passed in the conversation he had with Frederick: The poet was not at all dazzled by the splendour of the hero, he shewed as much prudence and wisdom, as patriotic freedom, and deserved the very advantageous opinion formed of him by this monarch. This honour, which has often proved dangerous, not only to wits, but also to persons who pique themselves on being philosophers, shews how much Gellert’s name and merits were in estimation. The place where he was born, experienced the happy effects of this celebrity. “Our little town” his sister writes to him, “has not been much burthened with lodging troops; and

General Haffen has expressly declared to the chief magistrate, that this arose from regard for the person and writings of Professor Gellert. Testimonies, so uncommon, of the admiration due to him, increased the esteem of those for him, who judge merely from the opinion of others, and who are less struck with merit itself, than with the honours paid to it. The more such people saw him respected, the greater became his power of being useful to them.

However great the respect in which he was held at the university, and however great his usefulness there, he possessed no other situation in it than that of professor extraordinary; not that the government was capable of forgetting him, but that no chair of professor in ordinary had been vacant in the faculty to which he belonged. Foreigners of the greatest distinction tried to increase his emoluments. Mr Mitchel, the English envoy, employed himself to this purpose, with zeal, unknown to Gellert, who was very grateful for his exertions, though he himself opposed the success of this solicitation. "I can assure you," writes he to Count Bruhl, "that it is not by my desire Mr Mitchel has recommended me. I do not wish for any post; I am a valetudinarian, and cannot hope for a long life. I am not in want, and God gives me more than to many others. What then can I desire? I have represented

this to the envoy himself, but ineffectually. Entreat your uncle not to let this foreign solicitation, in which I have no share, induce him to endeavour to procure me a pension in such distressing times, in which our country suffers so much misery."

However, a chair of professor in ordinary became vacant, by the death of Dr Muller, a philosopher of reputation in his time. Immediately a distinguished patron of the sciences wrote to Gellert from Dresden, that the court was determined to reward his merit, by giving him this post; and that he gave him timely notice of it, that he might consult with himself, and see whether it suited him to accept it or not. All his friends, Ernesti, Wagner, and particularly Rübener, pressed him warmly to take a resolution conformable to the views of the court. As he derived, almost entirely, from his works, the means of supplying himself very scantily with the necessaries of life, a fixed and certain revenue could not but be desirable for him, in the infirm state of health he was in, and which might grow worse every day. But this motive had so little power over his mind, that notwithstanding all the representations of his friends, he refused the post intended him. However great his zeal for the good of the university, and with whatever ardour he wished to be useful to it, he formed to himself so high an idea of the duties belonging to the post

of ordinary professor, that he dreaded being unable to discharge them in their full extent, on account of his frequent illness. He made it therefore a point of conscience not to expose himself to this danger. "Why" writes he to Count Bruhl "with to procure for me by your credit, a post which by no means suits me? If I have refused myself to your instances and those of my other friends, do not suppose it to proceed from an overstretched modesty. In real truth, reasons of conscience alone have determined me; It is my ill health, my time of life, and the visible decline of my powers, which produce my resolution, and were I not guided by these motives, why should I reject so advantageous a situation? I should fail in my duty, I should act against my own interest, I should refuse from mere caprice to follow the advice of my best friend, and of my patrons: This is what you would not suspect of me. Ah! If you were here, could you witness my infirmities, did you know how much I suffer, particularly during the last two years, sometimes from weakness of lungs, enfeebled and worn out, sometimes from continual headache, and sometimes from a failure of memory which make all application painful, you certainly would not advise me to load myself with fresh duties. My refusal cannot be detrimental to the academy: the little my strength still permits me to do, I can do as professor extra-

ordinary. Had this post been offered me in 1751, I should have thought myself called upon to have accepted it; but, in 1761, it is my duty to entreat that my acceptance may be dispensed with. My friends think like people in good health, and they are right; I think as a sick man, and I am in the right also. My resolution is not dictated by laziness; this is proved by the works I have published, and the lessons I still give. I have no longer the strength I possessed ten years ago, and I am grieved at it; but what shame should I not draw on myself, if, believing I still had it, I were to engage myself in uneasinesses and embarrassments which I might have avoided?"

These strong representations, had the effect Gellert desired, and he was as grateful for it, as any one could have been for a particular favour. He was so far, however, from relaxing in his academical functions, that, on the contrary, he applied to them almost beyond his strength, even in the public lessons, which so many professors neglect without scruple. He wished to do away even the slightest suspicion of preferring his ease or his liberty, to the good of his disciples.

His wants were few, because he was very moderate in all his desires, and that he neither sought the conveniences nor amusements, which others consider as necessary. He confided in Divine Providence,

and that entirely, from a conviction that necessities are seldom wanting to those who know how to be content with a little. This confidence was, also, every now and then, justified and supported by some agreeable occurrence. One of his most beloved disciples, had, for many years, given him a pension of a hundred and fifty crowns, without Gellert's grateful heart being able to discover his benefactor, which, I believe, in fact, was never known till after his death. Hardly a year passed without Gellert's receiving pretty considerable presents by the post, sometimes a hundred, sometimes two hundred crowns. Those who made them, added to the value of their gifts, by the generous measures they took to manage his delicacy, and leave him ignorant to whom he was obliged. The munificence of the sovereign, thought proper, also, to reward the modest disinterestedness with which he had twice refused the post of professor ordinary. The pension he received as professor extraordinary, was augmented; and when, in M. de Maseov, Germany had lost one of its best historians, and Leipzick one of the principal ornaments of its university, the pension this great man received, was assigned to Gellert. This was a new occasion for him to prove his modesty and disinterestedness. As soon as he was informed of the intentions of the court, he wrote thus to Count Maurice de Bruhl. "The pension

intended for me, is more considerable than I was aware of; and, I can assure you, that it is only since yesterday I have learnt from my brother, that it amounts to 485 crowns. I do not desire so much, my dear count, and I do not think I ought to accept it. You certainly recollect that I have, for the last ten years, received a pension of one hundred crowns by order of the court. Were I to unite these two pensions, it would be then 585 crowns that I should receive annually. It is too much, and more than I desire. Some other man of letters might be gratified with a part of that sum; there would still remain enough for me. I should think, therefore, my dear count, that the pension ought to be reduced to 400 crowns. Thus, I should receive annually, 300 crowns more than I have had hitherto; and, if God does not permit me to become entirely incapable of all employment, this sum will be sufficient for me, and I shall, besides, have something remaining, to bestow on persons poorer than myself." Gellert went even so far as to point out some persons of merit, to whom the 185 crowns might be given, which he scrupled to accept. His delicacy, however, was not listened to, and the whole pension was assigned him. Finding himself on this so much more at his ease than heretofore, he was able to consecrate still more time to his disciples, and plea-

fed himself with receiving them frequently, and with being useful to them in familiar conversations.

King Augustus being dead, Frederic Christian succeeded to the government. His eminent qualities gave the unhappy Saxony hopes of a return of its ancient prosperity. That prince, not only wished to be the sovereign, but also the father, the benefactor, and the consolation of his people, who, during so many successive years, had been so unfortunate. One of his first cares was to patronise the sciences ; the flourishing state in which they had always been in this country, had distinguished it advantageously from most of the other countries of Germany, but he tried to give them an additional lustre, by bestowing recompences on the learned men of superior merit. This good prince, did more in regard to this, during too short a reign, than many monarchs, who flatter themselves with the hope of being ranked with the Antoninuses and Trajans, have done in the course of a long life. The talents and merits of Gellert could not escape so enlightened a sovereign. He was distinguished by him, not only by the most flattering testimonies of esteem, but, moreover, by a very considerable present ; and, he proved, by this, what talents, capacity, and zeal for the progress of the sciences and virtue, might expect from his benevolent heart. This prince, so worthy of long life, was too soon torn from Saxony, and

his premature death plunged all his subjects in melancholy and mourning. Gellert joined in lamenting him, and the desire of celebrating so good a prince in his verses, made him regret, for the first time, having lost that warmth of imagination, without which, no poetry can exist. The son and successor of Frederic Christian, had the same sentiments as his father towards Gellert. The elector, who loved and patronised the sciences, knew his value, and distinguished him particularly. The princes Albert and Clement, and the princess Christina, frequently did him the honour of conversing with him, and expressed their esteem and good-will towards him, in terms, which did no less honour to their hearts, than to their taste and understanding. If he was beloved and considered in his own country, he was no less so by foreign nations. He frequently received from the different provinces of Germany, from Livonia, from Denmark, from Hungary, considerable presents, sent him by unknown persons, some, who had been his pupils, others, who were merely admirers of his works. M. de Rochau de Reckan, who had become acquainted with him during the war, not only maintained a very regular epistolary correspondence with him, but gave him every year, notwithstanding his resistance, proofs of generosity which would have done honour to a prince.

In such circumstances, Gellert, whose desires had always been moderate, might have been content and happy, if it had only pleased Providence to have diminished his corporal sufferings. But his continual indispositions never permitted him any pure enjoyment, even during those years in which he seemed to possess all the satisfactions, and all the conveniences of life, which could be desired by a scholar so moderate in his wishes as he was. He aspired to another and more sublime felicity, and felt, more and more, in the midst of the clouds which enveloped his soul, the empty nothingness of all terrestrial advantages. His continual sufferings made him melancholy, and his scrupulous piety made him sometimes fearful, lest that insurmountable melancholy should proceed from other cause than corporal ills. He longed for that inward peace, which is produced by a lively sentiment of religion, and of the inestimable advantages it promises to men. But the more earnestly he desired this, the less he dared allow himself to think, that for the enjoyment of this peace he so much wished for, a certain degree of health was wanting, which he did not possess. It is true, that for a long time past, in the reflections and examination he was accustomed to make at the close of each year, he reckoned, amongst the chief favours of Providence, that of having preserved his heart and his conduct from all voluntary disorder.

But this did not appear, in his opinion, sufficient to tranquillise him completely concerning his spiritual state, because he did not find that his prayers, his devotional exercises, his meditations on eternity, his efforts to improve, had in them that degree of fervour and of zeal he would have wished. Far from attributing these failings to his sufferings and worn out state, he rejected that idea, lest it should inspire him with a dangerous indulgence for his own weaknesses, calculated still more to retard his progress towards perfection. This excessive scrupulousness, and his constant attention to every, even the most involuntary, emotion of his heart, made him more discontented with himself, and might tend to encrease his melancholy, rather than diminish it. However, when suffering at all abated, religion made the liveliest and sweetest impressions on his heart. His friends affirm also, that however oppressed he might be by the weight of his sufferings, a sudden change took place in him, his voice was re-animated, and his looks became more serene, whenever the conversation turned on religion, virtue, and piety. Nevertheless, he did not dare, in his hours of melancholy, to draw from hence any consequence in favour of his spiritual state. This degree of rigour is certainly excessive, but its source is highly respectable. In the mean time, as he founded his hopes of becoming better not on his

own strength, but on Divine Grace, it preserved him from the illusions to which he might have yielded, in believing himself further advanced in piety than he was in fact, and preserved him also from extreme depression, which arises from self-disapprobation, and which, joined to his natural melancholy, would have been insupportable. It redoubled his zeal for virtue, his vigilance in avoiding evil, and his circumspection in every step he took. The Holy Scriptures were to him, what they ought to be to every Christian, the work he loved and consulted most. In reading this sacred book, as well as every other writing on religion, he was very careful to apply to himself the truths and precepts it contained, as the means of correcting or improving his dispositions. Though he did not always obtain from his prayers all the consolation he had hoped for, this was never a reason with him for discontinuing prayer ; when he perceived that he had no longer sufficient strength to prolong his devotions as much as he would have wished, he resolved to pray more frequently, and the habit of this exercise, so salutary for the soul, contributed much to his progress in piety. If all these cares and precautions did not succeed entirely in overcoming the uneasinesses to which his melancholy continually inclined him, at least, he was indebted to them, for strength to apply himself, without relaxation, to fulfil all his duties.

There are few men, perhaps, whose lives have been chequered by so many days of gloom ; nevertheless, all his days were useful, and certainly there are very few who can shew a better use made even of the happiest life.

Gellert proved by his example, that evils endured with constancy, always produce salutary effects, though they retard the enjoyment of those pleasures which piety has a right to promise itself. What a source of instruction and encouragement does such an example furnish to those who are called to combat with evils nearly the same. When the soul of one who endures them, views incessantly to the beneficent designs of the Being who dispenses them, it triumphs, at length, over the sentiment of pain, and experiences, if not a constant joy, at least, an habitual calm. Gellert experienced this ; for, during the last five years of his life, notwithstanding the deplorable state of his health, he attained to the enjoyment of an inward tranquillity, very little inferior to what had been the object of his wishes. His journal furnishes the proof of this change. If it still contains complaints dictated by his humility, on the weakness of his faith and the luke-warmness of his devotion, at least, it no longer, or rarely, offers the distressing expression of the reproaches and scruples, which his melancholy used formerly so frequently to occasion.

With the humblest sentiments, he reckoned with himself on the dispositions of his heart ; it was always to God, and never to himself, that he attributed the good he did : But he applied to himself, with more confidence, the promises of Divine Grace ; he considered his sufferings as trials, which he was called to submit to with patience ; if he felt that his faith was yet weak, he consoled himself by reflecting, that, at least, it was sincere ; this idea excited him to surmount the uneasinesses which might still disturb him ; because God has less regard to the degree, than to the sincerity of faith. Finally, he acknowledges that he has a more lively sense of the grace and mercies of God, and exhorts himself not to be alarmed because he does not constantly experience distinct emotions of peace and heavenly joy in believing, because the Author of his salvation is a compassionate High Priest, who supports our weaknesses, and cures our infirmities. Those solemn days, particularly when he approached the Lord's table, were become to him days much fuller of comfort. " I exalt," said he, " the infinite mercy of God, which has displayed itself this day in my favour. However imperfect my preparation for this sacred act, and however I might wish that my sensibility had been more animated, I, at least, had no distractions, no doubt, no thought, which ought to disturb me. I prayed with zeal, I listened to the

preacher with attention, and in the midst of my spiritual and corporeal infirmities, the word of grace consoles me, I feel certain of obtaining pardon for my sins for the love of Jesus Christ; of receiving the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which is so necessary to me, to strengthen my faith, and purify my heart; and I enjoy the hope of participating in the life eternal."

It was not to any abatement of his sufferings that this happy revolution could be attributed. The illness which daily tormented him, and of which the source was unknown, resisted every remedy applied to it. His friends advised him to try the waters of Carlsbad, because, at least, they could not do him any harm, and that exercise and change of scene might be useful to him. Gellert followed this advice of his physicians in 1763, and the waters of Carlsbad did not make him worse, but did not produce all the good effects which had been hoped from them. Nevertheless, his residence at Carlsbad procured him many satisfactions. He had the advantage of forming an acquaintance there with many persons of the most distinguished rank, who congratulated themselves, in their turn, on meeting so celebrated an author, who had so long been in possession of their esteem. The relation of this journey, addressed to an intimate female friend, is so interesting, especially from the picture he gives of his new acquaintances, that it would be a great loss to the

reader not to have his own words. " Rejoice with me, my dear friends, rejoice with me ! After seven weeks residence at Carlsbad, I am returned to the place I had quitted full of anxiety, and, I return, at least, more composed in mind, if not in better health. However that may be, I have fulfilled a duty which I owed to my health, say my physicians ; thus, my conscience is satisfied, and that is always a great matter. If it pleases God to make this, or any other means, instrumental to the relief of my sufferings, I shall consider it as a precious blessing. But if he does not see fit to deliver me from them, nor even to lessen them, he will give me strength to support them with patience, and extract salutary improvement from them, which is also a blessing, though not commonly the object of our desires : we all prefer being freed from misery, but our heart does not understand its true interests, or it is too covetous. One of the pleasures which awaited my arrival was your letter, for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I am certain that your prayers and good wishes have constantly accompanied me. It is an additional reason for me to love you, to rejoice in the happiness you enjoy far from me, and continually to give you fresh marks of my gratitude and regard. But, say you, your giving me a circumstantial account of your residence at Carlsbad would prove the truth of these sentiments.

A circumstantial account? That will be difficult. How could it interest you to be told that I went to the spring every morning at five; that, when there, I drank, in the open air, eight, ten, and sometimes fifteen glasses of warm water; chatting sometimes with one, sometimes with another, and still oftener conversing with myself; that, after an hour and a half thus spent, I got on horseback, followed by a servant, I sung a morning hymn, and then looked very often at my watch, to see when I should be delivered from the torment of this ride; that General Laudon, mounted on the white horse he rode at the battle of Hochstet, sometimes accompanied me; that, on my return home, I read, during a quarter of an hour, in one of my *two* books; that I took chocolate; that, entirely overcome with fatigue, I dressed to go to the public walk, where I gave myself up to the conversation of those, who, from idleness, curiosity, friendship, or on account of the similarity of our complaints, addressed their discourse to me. What would you be the wiser, my dear correspondent, for my telling you all this? My Carlsbad journal does not, however, offer any much more interesting occurrences; for the afternoon, except the fifteen glasses of water, was spent like the morning: tiresome leisure, discourse on the good or bad effects of the waters, reciprocal compliments, praises I did not deserve, questions which

I did not like to answer, invitations I could not accept, rides on horseback, which sometimes made me suffer from cold, and sometimes overcame me with heat. The night, what a happy circumstance! repaid me for the fatigues of the day, and made me support this Carlsbad, so dismal a residence to me; and where, I recollect, that seeking solitude amongst its high mountains, I shed ten years ago many bitter tears.

“ But you might tell me something about your new acquaintances? I can certainly name them to you, madam, but not draw their characters exactly. Observation is required, to enable us to delineate characters; and all application, you know, is forbidden to the water-drinkers. One of my first acquaintances, and also one of the most interesting, is General Laudon, a man of a singular character; serious, modest, a little melancholy, like me, talks little, like me, but expressing himself with sense and propriety; never speaking of his exploits, and seldom of his profession; he listens with attention, and you discover in his manner, and in his whole appearance, that propriety and amiable simplicity which reigns in his conversation. He is well made, without being tall; thin, but not so thin as I am; his cast of countenance is thoughtful, and his eyes, which are sunk in his head, of a bright grey, something like mine. It was by little and little that he

came to converse familiarly with me, and I believe it was my melancholy air which procured me his confidence. 'I should often seek you,' said he to me, on meeting me one day in a private walk, 'but that I fear being troublesome. Tell me, M. le Professeur,' said he, one day, to me, 'how is it possible you can have written so much, and infused so much gaiety into your works? To see you, one cannot well conceive it.' I will explain this matter to you, replied I, but first, M. le General, tell me, how is it possible that you can have gained the battle—the battle of Kunnerfdorf, and taken Schweidnitz, in the space of one night? Seeing you, one cannot well conceive it. At this moment I saw him laugh, for the first time; he generally confines himself to a smile. He had informed himself exactly concerning my tastes; never invited me to his table but when he was alone; hardly ever had any thing served but light food; offered me no wine but my own; let me talk with unreserve, and conversed with me in the same manner; allowed me to withdraw soon after dinner; in a word, conformed himself almost entirely to my inclinations. I never heard him say any thing but what was good, and he always appeared to me to be religious. He wished me to chuse a little library for him; and much regretted not having attended to study. But, in truth, his natural penetration, and his spirit of

observation, supplied his want of knowledge ; moreover, he is very fond of reading. ‘ What could I give you, which might be agreeable to you ;’ said he, to me, one day, ‘ I wish I could know ?’ M. le General, answered I, in my circumstances, could you give me the whole university, the gift would be indifferent to me. His nephew, a lieutenant in the regiment of Laudon, had communicated to me a desire of renewing his studies, and desired me to request his uncle’s permission to pass a year at Leipsick. ‘ Willingly,’ answered the general, ‘ if you will allow him to be recommended to your care.’ When he wished to converse confidentially with me, he drew me from the company, to a retired walk, and then no one interrupted us. Our adieus were short. What I have just now said, I entrust to your probity. Farewell ; you shall hear from me. Adieu, my dear general, may God protect and bless your days.

“ What other acquaintances, say you, have you made ? Count U***, a very experienced and sensible man ; still very lively, though far advanced in life ; who treated me with much regard, and gave me no uneasiness, but by being deaf, and obliging me to strain my lungs when I spoke to him.

“ Count T***, his son-in-law, an excellent hearted young man, and who attached himself very much to your friend. He came to me, charged, he said,

with compliments from Vienna, on the part of Mr S * * *, and this began our acquaintance. I asked him next day how Mr S * * * could know that I should come to Carlsbad. 'I earnestly desired,' said he, 'to be acquainted with you, and I gave you these compliments, that I might have occasion to speak to you.' No one has been more kindly assiduous about me, nor shewn me more attention, nor sought more to impress others in my favour, than this Count T * * *. 'I shall speak of you to my empress,' said he, 'and tell her of our acquaintance; it will give me consequence.' He desired me to send him my works on my return to Leipfick. But why so, Count? You have them all, or, at least, you have told me they are to be had at Vienna. 'That is true, Sir, but I wish to receive them from yourself, that I may have an opportunity of writing to you, to thank you for them.' After he had taken leave of me, it rained hard. 'How glad am I of this shower,' said he, 'it gives me a fair pretence for staying a little longer with you.' He is gay, full of frankness, and good nature. 'O that I had studied at Leipfick!' was his constant exclamation. He had heard that I was forbidden coffee, and immediately brought me two pounds of chocolate from Vienna. His wife is very agreeable, and his mother no less so.

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“ With General Z * *, an old, honest, and religious officer, I conversed willingly. The weakness, and wounds in his head, obliged him to keep on his hat, even at table. I advised him to resign his post, and employ his remaining life in preparation for death. I was delighted to see how much he loved his daughter, a young person, of a few years past twenty, who was almost all his society. If he walked, she accompanied him ; if he went in a carriage, she was always to be seen at his side.

“ M. de Z * *, of Silesia, the most suffering and most patient of all the water-drinkers, was a martyr to the gout ; but the moment his pains gave him some respite, his countenance expressed a pious serenity. Carried in a litter, by his vassals, he had travelled forty miles to Carlsbad ; he took the waters, and the swelling in his feet increased prodigiously ; for a long time he had ceased to eat meat ; after that, he gave up even bread, water, broth ; and Hoffmann’s balsam was all his nourishment. I paid him frequent visits, the latter part of the time, twice or thrice a day ; and I gave him a pious book, which drew on me, from him, a thousand blessings. I was one of those, who, about a fortnight after his arrival, advised him to return home. He had always enjoyed remarkably good health, till the last ten years of the war. The fright given him by the Croates, may, perhaps, have been the origin of the gout,

with which he is tormented at sixty-three years of age. On taking leave of me, 'what consolatory sentence' said he, 'will you give me to meditate on during my journey?' Dear, and suffering man, returned I, think often on these words, *Fear not thou, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness* *. He clasped his trembling hands together, turned his eyes up to heaven, and wept. His litter conducted him safe to Zittaw; that is all I have learnt concerning him. And here, also, shall terminate this letter.

"A multitude of people at Carlsbad (good heavens, how have I deserved it!) vied with each other in expressing the tenderest interest concerning me, and in forming the most affecting wishes for my happiness; thanked me for my writings, and particularly for my sacred songs; so easy is it to gain the affections of men, when we have endeavoured to bring useful productions to light, and been, in some degree, successful in these endeavours. Adieu, my friend; convey my salutations to your parents, your sister, &c."

Gellert's health, without getting worse, had not become better by the use of the waters of Carlsbad; however, as he seemed sufficiently strong to bear

Isaiah, chap. xli. v. 10.

them, his physicians advised him to try them again, and promised themselves some good effects from them, as the seat of the disorder seemed in the intestines. He allowed himself to be prevailed on to return to Carlsbad ; but this journey, attended with the same agreeable circumstances, was quite as useless to his health as the preceding year. " At length," writes he to the same friend, to whom the account already given of his former journey was addressed, " at length, I am, I thank God, returned safely from my second, and, I trust, last journey to Carlsbad. I write you word of this before any of my other friends, because I know you expect this intelligence with impatience ; that it will give you pleasure, and that you will unite with me in thanking God for this blessing. The history of this residence at Carlsbad is nearly the same as that of last year. I took the waters during thirty-four days, without being either better or worse than on my arrival. I was always the first at the spring, the first on horseback, and the first on the walk ; fought after, questioned by all kinds of people, good and bad ; sometimes honoured with a tender compassion, sometimes abashed, and sometimes even tormented, with praises I did not deserve. I met again several of the acquaintances I made the year before. Count U * * *, and his wife, for example, who not only both treated me with much esteem, but even with

particular confidence. On taking leave of me, she presented me with a book which had belonged to the Archduchess Isabella, lately deceased, in which she wrote her name. I saw, also, General Z * * *, who embraced me cordially the moment he perceived me, and informed me, that, in his sixty-fifth year, he was on the point of celebrating his second nuptials. Instead of General Laudon, who was not this year at Carlsbad, I renewed my acquaintance with M. de S * *, a man full of probity and knowledge, whom I had seen some years ago at Leipfick. In a confidential discourse, he had spoken to me, at that time, of those circumstances in his life which he considered as most happy, and for which he could never sufficiently thank Providence ; these were, having had a religious father, whose example had made an early impression on him ; a good governor, who had for a twelvemonth carefully instructed him, and inspired him with a love for religion ; lastly, a wife, whose love and wisdom had assisted him to correct many faults in himself, to be more attentive to his conduct, and to become every day better and more satisfied with his lot. He had lost this estimable woman ; his heart was torn by this recollection ; and he could never speak of her without shedding tears. I had advised him to think of a second marriage ; and when he saw me again at Carlsbad, he presented his wife to me, saying to her, ‘ This is the friend

who encouraged me to seek my happiness in a second conjugal union ; and I ought to tell him, in your presence, that I have found it.' He had at first turned his eye on a very near relation of his first wife ; but she died, and previous to quitting this world, recommended to him the lady he is now married to ; it is a well assorted, and a very happy marriage. She wished to surprize me with an agreeable present, certainly on account of the obliging manner in which her husband had introduced her to me, and as she had learnt, I know not how, that I was fond of flowers, she next morning sent me a very beautiful nosegay. I was delighted with my present, but my pleasure was of short duration. In the morning, when I received it, I was still at the spring, and all the ladies who were there, assembled round my nosegay like bees, and I was forced, much against my will, to distribute it amongst them.

“ Immediately on my arrival at Carlsbad, Mademoiselle de S****, accompanied by Mademoiselle P**, came to my apartment to welcome me. After three inconvenient and fatiguing days journey, this was the first agreeable moment I experienced. You will easily suppose, my friend, that I attached myself particularly to the society of the Countess —. Her daughter's health not permitting her to accept any invitation, I more willingly, and more frequently eat at her table than at any other. These

two ladies would have taught me, had I not known it already, that true merit, when it is accompanied by modesty, is ever attractive, and obtains from every one, love, approbation, and respect. Even those persons, who from national pride, have little regard for foreigners, and suspect our virtues, because we profess a different faith from theirs, made an exception to their general rule in favour of the countess and her daughter. The countess (I have heard, by natives of Austria and Bohemia) is a woman every one ought to esteem. Her daughter, by her sweet and gentle appearance, need only to shew herself to please. The Countesses U * * * and T * * * were continually with her, and on her departure, traversed in a carriage with me, great part of the town to accompany her ; and their expressive looks dwelt so long and so tenderly on her, that I could hardly restrain my own tears.

“ But you wish me to speak of my new acquaintances : Well, my friend, here are some of them. Count H * *, one of the great noblemen of Vienna, and his lady. The Countess V. had mentioned them to me with much approbation, and, in fact, I found them persons of singular merit. As he is fond of letters, and of a delicate constitution, he soon drew towards me ; and from the first moment, he made his conversation equally easy and agreeable to me. The features of his face no less distinguish

him from the common race of men, than the goodness and uprightness of his heart. His high forehead, announces something grave and sensible; he has large blue prominent eyes, which seem ready to start from their orbits; an aquiline nose, of an extraordinary size; and this face, singular as it is, pleases when you are accustomed to it, because it promises candour and understanding. He, and the countess, have visited most of the countries in Europe, and they seem to have imbibed whatever of estimable was to be found in other nations. One day, when we were speaking of courtiers, ‘I seldom go to court,’ said he, ‘and my only ambition is properly to fulfil the duties of my place; but every time I go there, I have the satisfaction of hearing my sovereigns solicit me to go there more frequently. The favourites, on their side, receive me well, because they are persuaded I do not come there either to do them prejudices, or advance myself.’

“The Countess has a great deal of understanding, without seeking to display it; much knowledge of the world, with those manners which prepossess, and which please because they are the expression of an innate goodness. She is already in the autumn of life, and still is the joy and delight of her husband; and he, who approaches to old age, is the dearest object of his beloved companions af-

fections. I can say with truth, that I never saw amongst the great, a more affectionate couple, a more touching union. He is fond of taking long walks on foot ; and I have seen the countess climb the highest mountains, and remain there alone with him for hours ; she also rode on horse-back, unaccompanied by any one but him. In assemblies, if she perceived that he was fatigued with play, she freed him from constraint by taking his place. I am told that she always wears very fine diamonds ; but I can assure you, and I know you will easily believe me, that I never attended to them ; but her husband's picture, which she always wears on her arm, and which perfectly resembles him, is what strikes me in a lady who has been married these sixteen or twenty years. ' Look here,' said the count one day to me, shewing me his snuff box, ' this is my daughter's picture at six years old ; she is the only object of my hopes and cares on earth. This dear child has not yet had the small pox.'

" They were scarcely gone, when a servant brought me six bottles of Tokay from the count. I chatted with this man, and could not help observing to him, that I admired the eloquent affection with which he spoke of his master. ' Ah !' said he, ' all in the house do the same ; and any one who should be of a different opinion would not be endured amongst

us. The count has servants who have served him these twenty years, and have never heard a harsh word from his mouth. Our master and mistress treat us like their children; we cannot do otherwise than be faithful and honest; accordingly, we all serve them from attachment; and order and good conduct reign throughout the house.' Thus, good masters make good servants.

"I must mention one more lady from Vienna, the Countess T***, who has not the noble countenance nor the charming manners of the Countess H*** but rather a melancholy air; though, at the same time, a look of kindness: her physiognomy expresses nothing but this virtue; but on conversing with her, you discover in her as much sense as modesty. Her's is not original genius, but an understanding formed by reading, experience and reflection, guided by an excellent heart. She remained at Carlsbad much longer than Countess H**, and our conversations have been much more familiar and uninterrupted. Madam, said I one day to her, after we had been for a long time talking on education, from what I have heard you say, I could wish the empress were to entrust you with the care of educating one of the arch-duchesses. 'You are mistaken,' replied she, 'in the good opinion you have conceived of me. I have experienced, that reasoning well on education, and being able to surmount the innume-

rable obstacles which occur in its execution, particularly at court, are quite different things. During six months I occupied that post; after that, I resigned it; dissatisfied with myself, and sick both in body and mind. From an excessive zeal to have every thing right, I accomplished nothing; my great fault was, not being able to conceal, when necessary, the impressions of the joy or dissatisfaction I experienced. Even if I was silent, my countenance expressed, in spite of myself, whatever passed in my heart; thus I gave occasion to those I ought to have governed, to gain a power over me. It is difficult to educate one's own children, but infinitely more so to educate those who do not belong to us, when we are not endowed with the peculiar talents requisite for this purpose, and that we have no guide but our zeal and the rules of good sense. I know but one woman entirely fit to educate other people's children, this is Madame de Beaumont. My daughter, whom you know,' continued she, 'has been more formed by my example, (for I have never lost sight of her) than by my instructions; more by my conversation, and the extreme affection she has for her mother; more by the divine benediction which I have daily implored, than by my wisdom and ability.' This young lady is already grown up, and of a truly amiable character: She is very like Mademoiselle de S****.

“ I cannot pass over in silence the Countess H**, a Silesian lady. She was a canoness, and came to Carlsbad to oblige the Prince ***, her brother. She has a great deal of understanding, quickness, and reading, and honours me with her regard. She is neither a Madame de H**, nor a Madame de T**, but is, nevertheless, one of the most estimable persons I have met with at the baths, and one for whom the Countess V** had the highest regard. She returned to her chapter, which is in the Imperial dominions. I was obliged to promise that I would send her my writings. Her brother is a man of merit, well informed, and very modest.

“ The Prince de Z*** recurs just now to my mind; and provided you will promise not to suspect me of vanity, I will repeat to you the obliging things he said to me. He passed through Carlsbad, and dined with the Countess U***. He had heard of me, and wished to see me. The countess knew not how to contrive this, as I had once for all refused invitations to her table, on account of my bad health. She therefore requested the Countess V** to engage me to call on her immediately after dinner, because she had something very particular to say to me. I went accordingly, and found there the Prince de Z***, who began by saying to me, ‘ M. le Professeur, my youngest son, your great friend, would never forgive me had I passed through Carlsbad

without seeing you. When he has employed his day well, and when he has been docile and diligent, he is, by way of reward, permitted to spend an hour in reading your writings. It will give him great pleasure, if you allow me to give him compliments from you, and the assurance of your friendship.' I beg leave to request this favour of your highness, and, at the same time, request you to assure the prince, that I know of much higher rewards for his application than reading my works. On this, he said many flattering things, to which I listened without blushing, but nearly in silence. On taking leave of him, I thanked him for the protection he had afforded my country. 'There is nothing in that to require thanks, M. le Professeur; my intentions were good, I could have wished, and perhaps I ought, to have done more.'

"These are nearly all the little anecdotes relative to my stay at Carlsbad; they are dry, and little interesting; but you will see by the writing, my dear friend, that they are traced by a sick man's hand, and they are only for your own eye.

"We left Carlsbad the second of this month, and this is the fifth; and on the road, as well as here at Bonau, from whence I write to you, I have suffered more, and lost more, than during the five preceding weeks. It is thus Providence sees fit to humble me, that the praises of men may not swell my

heart with pride, and presumption; and that whilst they see nothing in me but what is estimable, I may be the more attentive to recollect my faults, and the imperfections of which they are far from suspecting me; and which are in fact likely to escape their observation. It is with the approbation of men as with riches; a precious advantage, for which we ought to bless heaven, but to which it is easy for us to yield up our hearts too much. I shall conclude this letter with some observations. I have, during this last stay at Carlsbad, found fewer men than women, of a rare and solid merit. Many of those who frequent watering places, are more agreeable there than elsewhere, and without being aware of it, disguise themselves to a certain degree. Those who have quitted their business, or the care of their house, feel the charm of liberty, and become more social, more affable. The haughty, perceiving that there is no satisfaction for them, if they do not deign to condescend a little, become more gracious. As it is known from the first, that this theatre will only be frequented during three or four weeks, most of the personages endeavour to play a fine part; and to deserve applause, they live and act with propriety. Many command their passions, as part of the regimen necessary to their cure, and because every thing yields to the dread of suffering. The sick constrain themselves, lest their ill humours

should make all that are in health fly from them. Thus, during some weeks, the waters make men sociable, complaisant, modest, compassionate, affable; and amongst a hundred people you meet there, very few are to be discovered who do not appear endowed with excellent dispositions. For this reason, I have always enquired what character my acquaintance bore when removed to a distance from Carlsbad.

“ One word concerning the Prince de L***. I have enjoyed very little of the society of this prince, whom I much love and honour. I have only once taken a ride with him on horseback, and only twice dined at his table, though it depended wholly on myself to have been at it every day. At his own house he was always surrounded with company; every one being eager to pay their court to him, and in the public walks, I was not my own master. I have been no small loser by this privation; for you know how much merit this prince possesses. The princess, his wife, is worthy of him.

“ I must not omit relating to you a little disaster which befel me at Carlsbad, which gave me much uneasiness at the time, and will always continue to give me some. From the first of my attendance at the spring, my teeth, already in a bad state, suffered from the quantity of burning hot water I was obliged to drink; at length, things went so far, that

it cost me—(O, I had rather have lost my books, though they are nothing less than indifferent to me)—it cost me the middle upper tooth, the tooth most essential to speech, and which had for a long time past lost its two neighbours. ‘Be composed,’ said my physician, who was a witness of the uneasiness this occasioned me, ‘there is a very able dentist from Prague in this place, who replaces lost teeth extremely well; called upon as you are to speak in public, you must absolutely have recourse to him. I reluctantly sent for the dentist. He promised wonders; tormented me with murderous instruments; and with many strokes of the lancet and the file, stuck into my gums a row of three teeth. I endured all this, and in the midst of my sufferings, went to dine at the Countess V * *’s: Lo! with my new teeth, I could neither speak, eat, nor sleep. In the afternoon I sent for the dentist, and desired him to deliver me from my torment, and never more to speak to me of false teeth. There are three ducats for your trouble, added I, with acrimony, take back these teeth and keep them, till I call for them. Thus I lost an indispensable tooth, three ducats and a whole day. In the morning, (for the doctor and the dentist had spread abroad the business) I received numberless congratulations on the good success of the operation; at night, as many compliments of condolence. Whilst stand-

ing at my window, still occupied with my losses, I saw a poor old jew pass by, struck long ago with the palsy, dragged along by his wife and two children, and who came to Carlsbad from forty miles beyond Warsaw ; Art not thou much happier than that man ? said I to myself ! Thou art able to speak, and to walk, he can do neither the one nor the other ; take good care not to be ungrateful !

“ At the moment of our arrival at Carlsbad, the Count Esterhasi, formerly envoy to our court, was buried. He set out ill from Vienna, and thought himself sure of recovering at Carlsbad ; he drank six glasses the very evening he arrived, slept well, began again the next day, and the third day terminated his life. O Lord, teach us to meditate on death in a salutary manner ! with this thought I took possession of my apartment.

“ The Countess V * *, and the Prince L * * * have solicited me to take a journey to Dresden with them, but my health will not allow me to listen to this proposal, and I preferred to return by the troublesome road of Annaberg, Chemnitz, and Bonau. Adieu, my friend ; present the assurances of my esteem and friendship to your parents, your sister, your brothers, &c. Bonau, 7th and 8th of August, 1764.

“ One more little adventure just to fill up this page. One morning as I was passing the new spring

on horseback, a gentleman ran up to me, and with much politeness, stopt my horse. 'Pardon me an indiscreet question M. le Professeur, I am the Baron de S * *, of Silesia. I think I am acquainted with your horse, and am curious to know whether you have had him long.' How long M. le Baron, I really cannot say exactly ; more than a year. But, perhaps, you wish to know from whence I had him ? I answer : from Prince Henry of Prussia's stables. 'Now I understand it all ;' said the baron, 'his adjutant-general M. de Kalkrutter, bought this horse of me for the prince, who rode it on all his marches. I have so much regard for you M. le Professeur, it is so good a horse, and I myself have rode it so often, that I am glad to see it in your possession. I thanked the baron, and begged him not to lay claim to his horse."

Gellert, who willingly acquitted himself, not only of what he considered as a duty, but of what was represented to him as such by others, had undertaken this journey in obedience to his physicians and friends, rather than from any hope he had of obtaining relief. From death alone he expected deliverance from his sufferings, and he daily familiarised his mind more and more with this idea, which formerly he could not consider without terror. He felt his strength daily diminish ; even the occupations he had been engaged in for so many years, became

painful to him, from an habitual heaviness, which prevented his attending to them with a free and serene mind. In order, therefore, to economise the remaining strength he had, and to consecrate to the public good as much of it as possible, he confined himself, from this time, within the circle of knowledge he had already acquired, and endeavoured to make it as useful to his auditors, as could be expected from such an instructor as himself. The eagerness with which these lessons were attended, had not diminished; and whether they had for object the belles lettres or morals, they were as instructive and as interesting as ever; even his languid airs, his enfeebled voice, his sweet and dejected looks, made them still more affecting. Without having attained old age, he possessed the dignity of a venerable old man, to whom youth listens with attention, love, and respect, because even his gravity carried the impression of kindness and good-will. The lessons which came from his lips, had the charm of a fine summer's evening, at the moment when the sun sheds its last beams, and his absence deprives nature of the lustre, without taking from its beauty. It is well known, in his own country, with what success, during the last years of his life, he gave lessons several times in the elector's presence; in that of his illustrious family, and of his court, from 1765 till 1769. The tears he drew from

his audience, proved how much they were affected, not only by the things he said, and his manner of saying them, but also by the personal merit of the orator. The sovereign, as well as the electress, his mother, gave him every assurance of their esteem, and particular marks of their favour. In 1767, he had been listened to with so much pleasure, that the elector desired a copy of his moral lessons, saying, 'he was desirous of having them for his own instruction.' Such a heart as Gellert's could not but feel much satisfaction from this, however much he was detached from worldly interests.

The following year the visible diminution of his strength inclined him to resign his employment, and to retire into the country near some of his friends, and occupy himself solely with his end. But he gave up this project. He felt less impressed with the necessity of seeking retirement, than with the duty of instructing the students by his lessons, his advice, and his example, as long as his strength had not totally abandoned him; and that, in itself, was certainly the best preparation for death, of whose approaches he was well aware. The greater his zeal for his scholars, the more he was afflicted when they did what was wrong; and to recal them to the path of duty, he addressed them in the serious and affectionate language of a father and a friend. This had its effect on the young people, because they were

full of veneration and attachment to their master. He experienced this in a very remarkable manner in 1768, about a year before his death, when suddenly, an unhappy spirit of discord and disorder broke out amongst the academical youth. Gellert was extremely fearful lest this disorder should prejudice the university, which, for half a century, had been distinguished for its virtue and the decency of its students; and to stop the progress of the evil, he, of his own accord, terminated one of his moral lessons with a grave and touching exhortation to peace and good morals. This had power enough to engage his numerous auditors to excite one another to return to their duty, from regard to their master. It is true the disturbances began again in a few days, but even at this moment of giddiness and confusion, the students did not fail to give unequivocal proofs of their respect for Gellert. The government wished him to renew his exhortations in another discourse; and though he had very little time to compose it, and that his health was in a deplorable state, his remonstrances must have made a great impression on those of his scholars who retained any sensibility.

“The foreigner and the citizen, gentlemen, the higher orders and the people, have ever considered our academy as a school of propriety and good morals. Let us watch, I conjure you, over the maintenance

of its good reputation, which may be tarnished by licentiousness; and let us labour to give it fresh lustre by making peace and good order to reign in it. How necessary, at this time, are these admonitions, these which I address to you! From whom can you be more disposed to listen to them, than from a man whose zeal and attachment you well know; who deeply interests himself in your honour, your pleasures, your real happiness; a man, in short, who has had the felicity of gaining your esteem and your affection. You will listen to me, then, O my beloved disciples! It is not only I myself, however, who speak to you; I speak likewise in the name, and by order of my sovereign, and of yours; of the sovereign whom I have glory in obeying, whilst some of those who hear me are, perhaps, very far from seeking their glory in this submission. It is, then, in the name of the sovereign, that I must tell you—but it is not to you, virtuous disciples, that I address myself, to you who are animated by the noble desire of instruction; it is to a small number of frivolous and restless young men that I am to set forth important truths, of which they appear to have lost sight; it is to them I declare, that in a well ordered republic, no one can, without a crime, erect himself into a defender of his prerogatives, his liberties, his pretended, or real rights, instead of having recourse to sovereign authority; it is to them I de-

clare, that to excite nocturnal disturbances, is to overturn the laws, disturb the general tranquility, and grievously to offend a respectable public : It is them whom I advertise, that such tumults are contrary to the intention even of him who occasions them, and may lead, dreadful thought ! may lead to the horrible crime of taking away the life of his fellow creature ; finally, it is to these I declare, that he who infringes the laws of the sovereign, infringes the laws of God himself. And who art thou, young man, to dare voluntarily, and in cool blood, to rebel against thy God !

“ What ! my dear fellow citizens, in the tranquil hours, of the night, whilst pious hearts raised to heaven, invoke and bless their God ; whilst the sick, extended on their beds, sigh after repose and consolation ; is it then that cries, tumult, and violence, interrupt the prayers of the Christian, and redouble the groans of the sick, disturb the meditations of the scholar, who sacrifices his sleep to the desire of instructing mankind, or to the labours of the artist, employed either for our use or our pleasures ? Can we contemplate with a tranquil eye this depravity of morals, this disorder, till now unknown in this place ? I would rather go and throw myself at the feet of my prince, who loves decency, sobriety, virtue ; who teaches them by his example ; I would go, not to solicit a favour he has permitted me to

request, but to conjure him to act with severity, to make the full weight of his displeasure fall on the turbulent and libertine spirits, in order to re-establish good morals amongst us ; or I would request of him, as the only favour, to permit my languishing, my last days, to be spent in a more peaceful place than Leipzick ; a residence formerly so calm, and so dear to my heart, but, alas ! where I can no longer succeed in teaching the art of living virtuously.

“ O my fellow-citizens, my friends, pupils of this university, children of respectable parents, in whose names I at this moment address you, it is not thus you ought to conduct yourselves : Rather keep before your eyes *whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things.* This is your glory, O young people ! your true glory before God and before man ! And would ye rather seek for it in the approbation of a few thoughtless young men, who neither know their own interests nor yours, nor the dictates of honour ! and who, in a few years will have no further connection with you, than to find this glory in the approbation and love of rational men, of your patrons, your masters, and of those on whom your fortune depends ? And

could ye without blushing, seek by violence in daylight, and in the face of men, what ye dare to seek when the shades of night envelope ye !”

“ O ! my brethren, where do students enjoy more consideration, more pleasures, than have always been found in our academy ? Have we not public theatres, concerts, gardens, country-houses, and libraries ? Have we not open tables, and every kind of assistance for those who are not in easy circumstances ? Do not the directors of the university govern us with mildness ? Does not the magistrate watch with solicitude over the public safety ? Does the governor exercise any other authority over us, than that of a father over his children ? And should we not make it our glory to shew our gratitude by leading under their direction, a Christian and peaceable life, in all decency and piety ? It is with the hope of seeing my prayers successful, that I quit this chair, to which I had rather never more return, if my hope proves fallacious, and my paternal solicitations should be rejected.”

Gellert did not experience this vexation, and it is well known that this exhortation contributed very much to the re-establishment of the public order and tranquillity. His health grew weaker, in the mean time, every day, and he no longer enjoyed those intervals of ease which he had sometimes felt during the preceding years. His dan

gerous situation occasioned universal affliction.— The elector felt it sensibly; and in order to facilitate to him a kind of exercise which might be salutary, he ordered to be chosen from amongst his horses the gentlest and safest as a present to Gellert. No one could be more grateful than Gellert was for this testimony of his sovereign's kindness; and in a letter, giving an account to a friend of the present he had received, of the curiosity with which the horse and its trappings had been examined, and of all the discourses held on the occasion, a sort of gaiety discovers itself, now seldom to be perceived in him. His body, however, was so much worn out by his continued sufferings, that he was incapable of supporting even the gentlest exercise. This state of weakness hindered him from making some alterations he had projected in his works, of which a new edition was published in 1768.

“The situation of my health,” says he in his preface, “forbids me from attempting any correction; I would willingly have suppressed part of my works, had I possessed the right of so doing. I am, however, obliged to present them again to the public, nearly such as they were, when that public deigned to grant them so favourable a reception; and I dare flatter myself, that it will excuse their faults in general, and especially in some pieces, (the

production of my youth), if it judges that the remaining parts may be useful. I have only made some alterations in my theatrical pieces, because their representation on the stage makes this kind of writing more liable than any other to produce bad impressions on the heart, and that it is impossible to be too prudent and circumspect in whatever may influence taste and morals." Gellert dedicated this new edition in 1769, to the elector of Saxony. "With how much goodness," writes he in his journal, "did that excellent prince receive me, and what obliging expressions fell from his lips, when I told him, that the purport of this dedication was not so much to prove my gratitude to him, which no words could express, as to remind the public how greatly I was indebted to my prince, and how much happiness Saxony enjoyed in having such a sovereign. "*I thank you very much,*" replied he, "*that can not but do me honour ; your name is celebrated every where.*" When I was about to withdraw ; "*shall not I hear one more of your moral lectures,*" said he, "*when I go to the approaching fair at Leipsic ?*" Very soon after I gave a lecture, and, God be praised, not without success ; its subject was the empire we ought to have over ourselves. I can hardly venture to say how much the elector and electress thanked me for it. God gave me strength to overcome the fatigue of the fair ; and I every where received testimonies

of esteem and affection." Soon after, he went by Meissen to Oberau, and to Haynichen. After his return from this journey, "I have," says he, "taken my last leave of my native town; may God bless it, protect my relatives, and have pity on me!"

On his return in 1769, he determined to revise and correct his moral lessons. He had been frequently and pressingly solicited to publish them; and many of his friends advised him to it. He felt some difficulty in determining to do so, fearing the work might not be worthy to be transmitted to posterity; the success these lessons had met with in his auditory, and which not even Gellert's modesty could conceal from him, was insufficient to overcome his doubts; because he believed, not without reason, that the reader is more difficult than the hearer, and that the orator who speaks, has many advantages over the author who prints. However, the favourable opinion entertained by his friends of this work, determined him to revise it as carefully as he could, to put it in a condition to be printed after his death; but which unfortunately preceded the execution of this project; and Gellert, in his last moments, entrusted the edition of his moral lessons to the care of Messrs Schlegel and Heyer, to whom the public is indebted for it. It is visible, in the discourse which Gellert designed as an introduction to his book, what a modest opinion he entertained of it. His two

friends observed in their preface, that these lessons were less designed to satisfy curiosity, to inform and exercise the understanding, than to touch the heart. We must not, therefore, seek in them for new discoveries in morality, new systems, ingenious hypotheses, demonstrations, properly so called, and solutions of embarrassing cases of conscience. Their great merit consists in the judicious choice of the most useful subjects; in the method in which they are treated; and in the attention of the author never to lose sight of the Christian religion, on which he founds the basis of all his morality. Some persons, however, have not considered the work in this point of view. In order to find out a weak side in it, (for many are fond of discovering faults in the productions of a celebrated writer), some have pretended to remark that it wanted depth. Gellert had no intention that it should be deep; therefore, the criticism falls to the ground of itself; but the justice due to this excellent work requires the following observation: viz. that many are inclined to believe that the waters of a river are deep, because they are muddy; whereas a clear stream appears to them shallow, because their sight can penetrate through it to the bottom.

Gellert did not live to superintend the publication of one of his most important works; his strength was entirely exhausted. For a considerable time he

had been subject to a painful constipation ; he was perpetually obliged to have recourse to art, but the oftener such assistance is necessary, the more it accelerates the extinction of that strength which it has for a moment re-animated. In the beginning of December 1769, the disorder made an alarming progress. Messrs Heyne and Hebenstreit, both experienced physicians, both zealous friends of Gellert, flew to his assistance, and employed every power of their art to save him. Their master, the able and learned Ludwig, who had over them the advantage of a longer experience, united his efforts with theirs to discover and apply new remedies. The Town and University shuddered at the idea of the loss with which they were threatened. But the moment of his reward was come ; and Gellert, who had given up all hope of longer life, experienced, perhaps for the first time, a pure and unmixed joy. He had frequently occupied his mind in reflecting on his end, but, by his own confession, this idea commonly disturbed him, and he feared not being able to overcome the terrors of death. The more a Christian is humble, the less he dares reckon on that secret strength which religion imparts in times of need. His fear of death, was, doubtless, a merely mechanical emotion ; and his soul waited for that moment in which the Christian beholds death without apprehension, and even with

joy. A firm, but ever humble confidence in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, appeared to elevate him above himself; and melancholy, the constant companion of his life, did not dare follow him to the confines of eternity. He was delivered from his apprehensions, and, nevertheless, preserved a constant sense of his imperfections, and of his unworthiness in the sight of the Supreme Being. He fixed his thoughts on the beatitude to which he was approaching; and to console his friends, distracted by the conviction that medical art tried in vain to prolong his days, he conversed with them on the glorious prospect before him.

Four days previous to his death, he had a private conversation with his sister-in-law, a very respectable woman, whose virtues had entirely gained his esteem, and who had been most assiduously attentive to him during his illness; and with Dr Heyne, the oldest friend he had at Leipzig: These conversations turned on family affairs, and on the publication of his remaining works, of which he bequeathed the care to his two absent friends, Messrs Schlegel and Heyer. His brother was too deeply affected by the state in which he saw him, to be present at these last arrangements. When Gellert had compleated them, mastering, in some sort, his weakness and his pains, he sat up, and, uncovering his head, the hairs of which already began to whiten,

he pronounced aloud such fervent prayers, animated with so deep a sentiment of humility, of gratitude, and of love for his God, his looks raised to heaven expressed such a profound peace, so celestial a joy, that it seemed to his friends as if they saw the image of a holy patriarch, a Jacob on his death bed blessing his children. He endeavoured to recall to his remembrance all the particular blessings he had received from Divine Goodness ; he specifically named all those of his friends who were still alive, many of his absent disciples, and recommended them in his prayers to the Divine favour and protection. But he did not wholly confine himself to the blessings he had received ; he recalled to his mind his faults, his weaknesses, and that with such a degree of humility, as produced an indelible impression on the minds of those present. This prayer was pronounced with a weak, but very intelligible voice ; and the fire of devotion with which it was animated, filled their eyes with tears, and their hearts with a respect for his piety, beyond what they ever felt before.

After having conversed and prayed with the two above-mentioned persons, he fell back on his bed, continued his meditations in silence, and thus prepared himself for the conversation of a worthy ecclesiastic in whom he had much confidence, and from whose hands he wished to receive the holy

sacrament for the last time. On the entrance of this friend, the manner in which Gellert spoke to him of his death, shewed that nothing disturbed the inward calm of his mind. He was very attentive to all the words uttered by the pious minister ; but nothing affected him more, nor excited in his heart a more lively sentiment of joy, than the consideration of the infinite love of the Redeemer towards mankind ; and this sentiment was accompanied with the most profound respect, and the sincerest humility. When amongst the passages of Scripture suited to his situation, these words taken from the history of Lazarus were pronounced, “ *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick ;*” penetrated with the sense of this passage, “ Ah !” exclaimed he, “ might I be happy enough to be allowed to apply these words to myself !” His pastor and his friend making him sensible that the Christian, who seeks salvation only in the merits of his Saviour, may be certain he is the peculiar object of his love, he immediately applied this consoling promise to himself : Yes, I hope, it O my Saviour, I hope that thou lovest me as one of thine own.

The power of these sentiments so far exceeded that of his sufferings, that, in the midst of the most violent pains, no complaint fell from his lips, only he requested his friends to pray for him. One of these having asked him whether he suffered much ?

“Most assuredly,” replied the pious sufferer, “but these pains are supportable.” “You have already endured many evils with firmness and resignation,” added his friend, “you will still continue to suffer with Christian fortitude; that religion which has strengthened you during your life, will support you in the hour of death.” “Alas, my dear friend,” replied Gellert, “I am a weak man, a poor sinner; pray for me that I may not yield to temptation.” Sincere as was this confession, as sincerely did he think himself certain of obtaining pardon, through the merits of the Redeemer.

On hearing of his danger, Mr Heyer came to Leipzig to see him; the moment Gellert perceived him, he said, “*This is a truth, and worthy to be received of all men*, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; this, my dear friend, this is my confession of faith on my death bed. But,” continued he with visible joy, “mercy has been extended to me; yes, God extends his mercy to me; this is what I, moreover, acknowledge: it is in this hope that I live, and am going to die.” He then set himself to exalting aloud, and in the most affecting manner, the infinite mercy of God.

These pious dispositions manifested themselves particularly in his last communion; and though his illness had already reduced him to a deplorable state, he collected all his remaining strength, in or-

der to acknowledge his faults, and make his confession of faith ; and the ardent zeal with which he was animated, must have absorbed, at that moment all his sense of suffering. He applied to himself all the promises of grace, which the deeply affected minister placed before him from the Gospel, with the utmost ardour, and with a tone of voice which announced the celestial joy with which his heart overflowed ; he called on those who witnessed this act of religion to edify themselves, with him, and to celebrate the glory of the Divine mercy. He at the same time assured the minister, that he had never felt so entirely the comfort and efficacy of the evangelical promises ; and that at this, more than at any other time, he felt how much those are to be pitied who refuse to seek their consolation in the Saviour's merits.

Notwithstanding the violence of his disorder, nothing could disturb the courage and serenity of his soul ; and he discovered none of those marks of weakness, which are too often seen in similar circumstances, even in true Christians.

The physicians, in the mean time, tried every thing their art could suggest, to save his life. The news of his desperate state reached the elector : much affected by the situation of this most useful citizen, he ordered the able Demiani to go to Leipzig, and to join his endeavours with those of the univer-

fty physicians, to save a life he so much valued, and desired to have an exact account of the success of their united efforts. Gellert submitted to all their experiments with admirable patience and courage; no complaint escaped him, though out of four and twenty hours, he was constantly obliged to pass sixteen under the surgeons hands. All, however, was in vain; neither the skill and assiduity of his physicians, the zeal and friendship by which they were animated, nor the kind attention of his sovereign, could arrest the departure of that life which every one so ardently wished should be prolonged. In the midst of the violent pains attendant on an inflammation of the bowels, the pious sufferer was occupied with the passion of his Saviour, who, he said, had suffered infinitely more to obtain for him the pardon of his sins; and his soul was so entirely absorbed in the contemplation of this salutary death, that he appeared little alive to the sense of his own sufferings. So much strength and courage does religion communicate to the dying Christian!

The fresh proof he received of the interest taken in him by the elector, on the arrival of the physician belonging to the court, excited his gratitude, and he loudly praised God for this consolation. "But," added he, as if fearful of yielding too much to the pleasure it gave him; "let us not place our trust in princes, they cannot help us, however good they

may be, and whatever desire they may have to be useful to us : my help comes from God !" When M. Demiani expressed to him the esteem and affection the prince had for him, and the alarm his illness occasioned at court, Gellert shed tears of gratitude. He fervently prayed for the prosperity of so good a sovereign, and for that of all his family. The sufferings of our Saviour being constantly in his thoughts, he compared afresh his state with that of Jesus, on the cross ; observing, that mere subject as he was, he died honoured with the compassion of his prince, whilst the Redeemer of mankind had not even obtained justice from men. At a moment when the disorder seemed to have attained its height, he exclaimed with a sigh, " O what sufferings ! " " But," resumed he immediately, " what are those sufferings in comparison of those of my Saviour ! He was reviled by those about him ; and I, unworthy creature, experience the good will of my prince !" Thus he intermixed acts of thanks for temporal benefits, with testimonies of gratitude for the great blessing of redemption ; and thus in prayers continually renewed, he implored without ceasing his pardon, and the completion of his salvation. His intimate friends resident at Dresden, and, in particular, his beloved Wagner, had hastened to see him ; he consoled them with the most affecting tenderness, and required from them no other office than that

they would pray for him, and help him to elevate his mind to God, when the violence of his disorder should make it impossible for him to pray himself with uninterrupted fervour. "I find it difficult," said he, "to follow what is addressed to me, only repeat to me the name of Jesus; whenever I pronounce it, or hear it pronounced by others, I feel myself animated with new strength, and fresh joy. Full of these sentiments, his deliverance drew nigh. His extenuated body decayed gradually; his soul maintained itself in that happy tranquillity arising from hope. The day preceding his death, some hours rest gave him power to renew his prayers for his sovereign, his relations, his friends, and the disciples who had been entrusted to his care; he named them all, and blessed them. His wishes in their behalf was his only return to the world he was leaving. At length he thought he felt the final approaches of death, and wished to know of his friends how much longer he might have to struggle with it. On being answered, perhaps an hour; "God be praised," said he, with looks of joy, and raising his hands, "only one more hour!" Then with a still more serene countenance, he turned on his side, prayed to God in silence, and in the midst of this prayer, and those of all present, who surrounded his bed, he slept the sleep of death, on the 13th of December 1769, at midnight.

This so peaceful end, recalls and confirms what Addison said when expiring : “ *Thus dies the Christian.*” And thus Gellert obtained his wish, expressed in a letter, wherein he mentions Addison’s death, saying, “ *Great God, how happy should I be, if my last end should be like his !*”

The affliction which spread itself in the morning throughout the town, with the news of Gellert’s death, was so lively and so universal, that it would be difficult to find words to express it. The whole nation shared in the grief of his fellow-citizens, as well as in that of the inhabitants of other countries, for whose happiness he had laboured, by enlightening the understandings, forming the morals, and instilling virtue and piety into so great a number of young people. Perhaps no grave has ever been watered with so many, and such sincere tears. He was praised with an enthusiasm, immediately after his death, which went beyond the bounds which ought to be preserved in praising even the best of mortals ; because excessive praises may lead to a suspicion of the real merit, and just reputation of the person so praised.

The superintendant of the posts, the worthy brother of Gellert, a man of letters, who lived in the strictest friendship with him, did not survive the grief of this separation above a month.

All who were well acquainted with Gellert, will ever remember him, with a mixture of joy and tenderness ; so precious is the advantage of having had him for a friend ! True merit is scarce at all times, and every where ; but amongst extraordinary men, it is still more uncommon to find those who make it their chief business to improve their hearts by religion, to do good for the love of so doing ; and employ all the gifts they have received from nature, in such a manner as may be most advantageous to their fellow-creatures. Gellert deserved this praise, the result of admiration, but still more the effect of attachment ; praise of which every virtuous man paid him the tribute, not only from a sense of justice, but with joy ; and which even the vicious man could not refuse him ; praise, in short, which he derived from his virtues and his piety, more than from his genius.

Gellert was of a moderate height, though he seemed tall enough when he raised his head, which generally hung down. His thinness was extreme, but nothing could be more noble than his countenance ; his forehead was high, and his eyes full of expression ; he had an aquiline nose, and a handsome mouth. The state of suffering in which he lived, had made him contract a serious look, which had even the appearance of melancholy, but through which shone the humanity, candour, and benevo-

lence which characterized his soul. In those moments in which he suffered less than usual, when he received the visit of a friend, or when he learnt the success of a charitable undertaking, an amiable serenity, a sweet smile overspread his countenance. His language was clear, insinuating, and the sound of his voice had in it something so tender, that it penetrated to the bottom of the hearts of those he conversed with. This tone of voice embellished whatever he read or recited. Amongst those who have heard him, there are, doubtless, very few who do not recollect that in reading his poems, particularly his spiritual songs, or when addressing to them a pathetic exhortation in his moral lessons, Gellert frequently drew tears from the eyes of his audience.

Several portraits have been taken of him, each of which bears some resemblance to the original. Those by Bausen and by Geyser, the first engraved on copper, the other in aqua fortis, are the best; But the public promise themselves one still better from Bausen, after an excellent portrait painted by Graf. The medal struck for him at Dresden by Stieler, Cameos, engraved by Kangsdorf, several china figures of him of the Meissen manufactory, his head taken in wax by Spohlen, and his medallion in Berlin porcelain, are distinguished amongst the

attempts hitherto made, to immortalize features which Gellert's soul has made so interesting.

In Gellert, the virtues and faults of natural disposition so counterbalanced one another, that it was easy to improve the one, and to weaken or correct the other. His feeling and tender heart attached itself passionately to every thing that can lead to true glory; he was full of candour and frankness, incapable of dissimulation and reserve. In his youth, he was susceptible of a lively gaiety, but without ever allowing it to rise to an excess which reason might condemn. In riper age he could be serene, but was hardly ever gay; he was not subject to those alternatives of noisy mirth, often experienced by hypochondriacs; and he had so much command over his melancholy, that no one suffered from it but himself.

None of his natural propensities had a strong dominion over him. He had a certain warmth of temper, which might produce in him a sudden chagrin, and momentary anger; but which never gave rise to a continued resentment. The only propensity he was particularly called on to resist, and which, by his own confession, might have had a bad influence on his moral character, was the desire of praise and celebrity; but his mistrust of himself, restrained this propensity within just bounds, and religion,

which embellished all his virtues, gave him strength to overcome it.

From his earliest years, Gellert had been taught a high respect for religion ; and during the whole course of his life, he experienced the happy influences of this early impression, though not always in the same degree. It was not to meer philosophical reasonings, and enquiries into the nature of things, their necessary relations, and their necessary effects, that Gellert was indebted for his Christian and pious sentiments ; he derived them from that faith, that inward conviction of the divinity of the Gospel, which every man capable of reasoning and reflecting, may acquire, if he sincerely seeks the truth. Serious and frequent meditations on the dogmas taught by the word of God, nourished and strengthened devotion more and more in his mind ; and piety may be said to have filled his whole soul, exalted all his faculties, and regulated the use of all his talents. He was sincerely attached to the doctrine of our church, and it gave him pain to see others deviate from it ; particularly any of those whom he honoured with his friendship. But he never showed himself intolerant towards those who thought differently from him, or who belonged to other communions ; on the contrary, he edified himself by the perusal of their works, whenever they tended to the advancement of true piety. It is well

known how much he esteemed the writings of Saurin, Bernard, Doddridge, and some other Englishmen, with what pleasure he read them, and how much he recommended them to others. No one was ever more sensible of the respectability derived to the truths of revelation from divine authority. Accordingly, he was particularly attached to those books whose object it is to establish the divinity of the Christian religion. He underlined those passages which appeared to contain the best proofs of this truth, that he might recollect them with the greater ease. He did the same in reading other books; and for example, many passages are to be found thus marked in his copy of continuation of Bossuet's discourse on the Universal History.

Gellert's conviction of the divinity of the Scriptures, made him receive with equal respect all the dogmas contained in it, whether they were directly connected with morality, or had but a distant reference to it. This disposition made him so reserved and modest in his researches, that he never attempted to fathom points which present difficulties apparently insurmountable to reason. He could not endure the doubts which so many people take pleasure in raising against religion: he was so ardently attached to it, and so convinced that it alone can procure the happiness of mankind, that he could not help considering these doubts and objections as so

many attempts against the public felicity. But of all the sophisms of infidelity, there were none he held in so much horror as those which tend to weaken the respect we owe to God, and our desire of pleasing him, to diminish that humility so necessary to man, and to hinder him from seeking after that solid virtue, which raises itself above all terrestrial views. His thoughts in solitude, his conversation in society, the lessons he gave to his scholars, his writings, his letters, his labours, his recreations, all that he said and did, was animated by the spirit of religion: Every thing with him had in view to increase its activity and its efficacy, as well in his own heart as in that of others. We have already said, that of all books there was none he read more frequently, or that he was more fond of reading, than the Bible. Amongst other works of piety, he preferred those which particularly address themselves to the heart, and admit most the influence of the holy spirit, because he found them best calculated to excite his love towards God, and to fortify his detestation of evil. Perhaps, however, it were to have been wished, for his own tranquillity, that he had had less taste for certain books of devotion, calculated to feed gloom and spiritual melancholy not required by the Gospel, and even contrary to that peace and serenity which religion ought naturally to produce.

In the outward demonstrations of his religious sentiments, there was nothing enthusiastic, nothing which could look like an affected devotion. It is true, he was easily imposed on by outward appearance of piety, and that he sometimes granted his esteem and his confidence to people who were only apparently devout; and very positive proofs of their hypocrisy were requisite to remove from his mind the favourable prejudice it had conceived concerning them. This, however, did not hinder him from holding in contempt those who make piety consist in outward show, in a proud abstinence from indifferent things, and from innocent pleasures; in an affected and appropriated language, in a composed demeanour, and in superstitious practices; and who, vain of their pretended sanctity, insolently prefer themselves to other men.

He was very exact in acquitting himself of the duties of public worship; and his zeal in this particular never relaxed. Not only on Sundays, but in the course of the week, he attended divine service regularly; and, notwithstanding the weakness of his health, he never allowed himself to dispense with that attendance, whatever the weather might be. Whenever he was not seen there, it might be concluded with certainty, that he had some unusual illness, or was kept at home by the express orders of his physician. He was always one of the first at

the religious assemblies, and one of the last who quitted them. The preacher always found in him the most attentive auditor, and the most indulgent judge. This man so much enlightened, and who so well understood the composition of sermons, never despised those which were not suited to the delicacy of his taste. To know what he thought of them, it was necessary to ask him expressly, and then he judged with that amiable indulgence, which seeks rather to throw a veil over and conceal faults, than to discover and criticise them; only when he heard young preachers, he invited them to his house, and, after having praised what was good in their discourse, he pointed out to them its defects; and, above all, instructed them how they might be corrected. If he was assiduous in attending divine service, he was no less so in participating of the holy communion. During many years, he had communicated in the little church of the hospital, but afterwards he preferred the great church. "Perhaps," said he, speaking to his friend Thalemann, "I have been wrong not to have hitherto performed my devotions in a more numerous assembly: Called upon as I am to instruct young people, it is my duty to set them a good example in this particular, as in every other." These examples were not useless; and many people have been heard to say, that they never were in the same

church with Gellert, without being deeply affected and edified, by the profound attention and respect with which this great man assisted at divine service.

Gellert was no less exact and zealous in his closet devotions. He especially applied himself to encrease the fervour of his prayers, because he was persuaded, as the true faithful have ever been, that this holy exercise has the most salutary influence over piety and virtue. "Of all my youthful days, said Gellert, speaking of himself, "there are none with which I am more dissatisfied, than with those in which I have neglected the duty of prayer; and I recollect, that, in proportion as my zeal in this duty became cooler, my evil propensities gained strength, in the same degree. To encrease the animation and fervour of my prayers, I have, therefore, for a long time past, taken up a habit of never reading the holy scriptures in the morning, without writing down one or two passages, that I might recall them to my mind, and meditate on them several times in the day. I generally chose some passage relative to the actual state of my heart, and calculated to excite sentiments of hope, fear, joy, humility, contentment, or resignation, according as I felt the need of them. These passages selected from the word of God, serve to inspire prayers suitable to the circumstances in which we find ourselves,

and, moreover, confirm us in the constant practice of Christian vigilance."

To facilitate the practice of piety, and of all his other duties, Gellert, from the year 1752, kept a journal of his life, persuaded that a writing in which we give an account with sincerity, and as under the eye of God, of our spiritual state, of our progress in well doing, of the faults we commit, is an excellent mode for attaining an exact knowledge of ourselves, and for inclining us to labour with redoubled diligence after our own improvement. It is to be supposed, that the style of this journal is not very much attended to: Gellert wrote it merely for his own use, and the duties of his vocation would not allow of his giving much time to it. Excepting a few short remarks on his health, his sufferings, his occupations, his greater or less disposition to labour, his epistolary correspondence, his little journies, the visits he paid or received, and his mode of conducting himself in them, especially when dissatisfied with himself, the death or the promotion of his friends, of his scholars, and of his acquaintance, and the presents he received, his journal was entirely composed of observations on his spiritual state. Sometimes he complains in it of disquieting thoughts and uneasinesses which agitated him; of his languor in prayer; of the various distractions of his thoughts

which disturbed them ; he laments his insensibility in regard to the truths of religion ; he deploras his weakneſſes and imperfections : Sometimes he re-animates himſelf to courage, to tranquillity, to hope, and to confidence in God. He frequently renews his reſolutions to be more exact in fulfilling all the duties of piety ; vigilant and active in his profeſſion ; humble when praiſed by men ; ſenſible and compaſſionate to the ſufferings of his neighbours ; and charitable and benevolent to the poor : Sometimes he recollets with gratitude the benefits he has received from God ; the ſpiritual mercies beſtowed on him ; the conſoling truths of the Goſpel ; the good religion has done to his ſoul, the happy moments, the hours of ſerenity and of joy, in which he has been able to acquit himſelf of pious exerciſes, and of other duties, with more ardour and alacrity : At other times, he ſharply reproaches himſelf with the faults he has had the miſfortune to commit ; with his impatience ; the petulance which eſcapes him in converſation ; his ſelf-love and his propenſity to vanity. Finally, in his journal are to be found ſeveral pious ejaculations, pious wiſhes, ardent prayers, in which he implores of God the pardon of his ſins, the aſſiſtance of grace, the conſolations of the Holy Spirit, the peace and repoſe of his conſcience. Every part of this journal exhibits a man who knows

how to guard himself from the illusions of self-love; who vigorously examines himself, without any returns of self-complacency; who has nothing so much at heart as to amend himself, to become better, and to labour after the great interests of his soul.

This piety, which Gellert endeavoured to animate from day to day, was the foundation of his love for virtue, not for that virtue which thinks it is sufficient to itself, but for that which seeks all its strength in the help of God, and desires to owe every thing to his grace, aspires continually after new degrees of perfection, and, nevertheless, refers to God all the glory of its progress; and is never more firm and constant than when it has reason to apprehend, that, whether from indifference or enmity, mankind will not pay it that tribute of esteem of which it endeavours to be worthy. Such was the virtue of which Gellert was ambitious; and his love for it was so ardent, that he shunned with the utmost care every thing that could carry even the appearance of being contrary to it. Nothing was so sacred with him as what he judged to be his duty. "*I must do my duty;*" was his usual answer when any endeavours were used to draw him off from these laborious occupations to which he thought himself obliged, or when he was solicited to allow himself some indulgence suitable

to his taste, or to pay a little more attention to his pleasure and convenience on particular occasions. No privation, no sacrifice was difficult to him, when doing what he thought himself called upon to perform, was in question.

His tender, compassionate heart was animated with an universal benevolence towards mankind. He entered with ardour into every thing that could be useful to them, and eagerly seized every opportunity of doing them good. But, above all things, he employed himself in seeking means to procure them that true happiness which is the result of piety and virtue. However great his abhorrence of vice, and with whatever severity he condemned it, he was, nevertheless, always full of compassion for those who allowed themselves to be carried away by the torrent of example, or by the violence of their passions, and he neglected nothing that could bring them back from their errors, and omitted nothing that could remedy even the temporal distresses they had brought on themselves by their ill conduct. His habitual melancholy did not prevent his being affable, kind and obliging to every one ; he was incapable of hating or despising any person whatever, always disposed to judge advantageously of his neighbour, to esteem those in whom he perceived merit ; but setting always a higher value on virtue and goodness of heart, than on the beauty of genius, and

the rarest talents. He was generally more affected by the happiness of others than by his own. He took the tenderest interest in their distresses ; and, far from confining himself to a fruitless compassion, he always sought means to relieve them. Though for a long time possessing but a very slender revenue, he was more liberal than most people are who have a great superfluity. He denied himself many conveniences and pleasures, that he might be enabled to do more good. His moderation constituted his riches : so that, notwithstanding the narrowness of his fortune, he had always something left to assist indigence. He relieved it with joy and eagerness, even when he shared with it what his own necessities would have required.

His scholars were always certain of assistance from him when they wanted it. He kept a list of those whose circumstances he knew to be straitened.

He informed himself concerning necessitous sick, and sent them money and assistance. In hard winters especially, he was attentive to procure them the means of being protected from cold ; but, equally modest as charitable, he left them in ignorance of their benefactor's name, and knew how to conceal himself so carefully, that it was hardly possible to discover him. He had a particular talent for comforting those who were unfortunate ; and when his means did not allow him to provide himself for

their necessities, he made it his business to interest the generosity of more opulent persons in their behalf. The poor had also a share in all the presents that were made him. "I know not what to think concerning what has happened to me," writes he to a friend; "eight days ago I received a hundred crowns by the Prussian post; and just now I have received a hundred more, under the same seal, directed in the same hand-writing! This almost frightens me; and what most perplexes me is, that these presents neither excite in me the joy nor the gratitude which I ought naturally to feel from them. Who, then, can be so persevering in enriching me whether I will or no? What shall I do with these donations? I sigh after health and patience, and time after time I receive gold. I would give all I possess to be free from those pains, which have attacked me this spring with more than common violence. Does the Almighty mean to teach me that all the riches in the world are of no value without health, and that resignation and patience are advantages infinitely more considerable, than riches and honours? Without doubt these presents are trials sent me by Providence; and, consequently, I ought to receive them with gratitude, and to endeavour to make a good use of them. I will, therefore, apply myself to shew that benevolence towards others, which others have shewn to me, without ostenta-

tion, and, if possible, without being known, from a pure principle of piety and gratitude to God, our sovereign benefactor. Such ought to be my only care, without troubling myself to seek out from whence these gifts come."

Equally disinterested and satisfied with his slender fortune, it is not wonderful that Gellert did not exact the remuneration he had a right to demand for his works. He very often even refused presents: He refused them with as much generosity as they were offered. In the first year of the war, an unknown foreigner commissioned a banker to pay him a considerable sum, without telling from whom it came; Gellert, however, answered, as he had already done on a similar occasion, to a lady of the highest rank: "I want for nothing, and many more deserving people are in indigence; give them what you had the goodness to intend for me." He conducted himself with the same disinterestedness and generosity when M. Keller, Prussian commandant at Leipzig, sent him word that he might choose whatever house best suited him, and that he would give orders for its being exempted from lodging the military. "No," replied Gellert, "this charge from which I should be exempted, would, perhaps, fall on some poor person; would that be a benefit to me?"

His extensive correspondence multiplied considerably the effects of his disposition to do good ; his desire of being useful was so well known, that people from all parts addressed themselves to him with confidence. Fathers asked him for directions in regard to the education of their sons ; mothers wished to receive his instructions, as to the mode of forming the hearts and understandings of their daughters, and frequently consulted him concerning the offers of marriage which were made for them ; young men requested him to advise them on their studies ; to him many persons who had doubts concerning religion, addressed themselves to have them cleared up ; and frequently people of the world asked his advice how to resist the temptations to which they were exposed. Gellert attended to all these applications, and never did he refuse to any one the advice, encouragement, information, consolation, or assistance it was in his power to give ; though he sometimes complained of these extensive correspondencies as burthen some, it is certain that he derived much inward satisfaction, from a consciousness of the good they enabled him to do : when he did a service, it was always with the best grace possible, and many times before it was requested of him. Some time before his death, one of his friends said to him in conversation, and without the least design, that he found himself embarrassed on account of his

having failed to receive a certain sum he had reckoned on; Gellert rose with that gay look of satisfaction, which was never visible in him, but on occasions particularly agreeable to him, and took from his scrutoire a roll of thirty guineas, saying, as he presented them to his friend, "I am seldom so rich, but happily I am so at this moment, and by so being enabled to relieve an honest man from difficulty; receive this money, I beg of you; I have no kind of need for it."

Friendship seemed to Gellert the first of earthly blessings; this sentiment did not express itself in him by extraordinary transports and effusions, but it was so solid and so constant, that even the longest absence could not weaken it. He appeared as if he loved all mankind equally, especially the virtuous part of it; but his particular friends well knew that he felt all the preference for them, which friendship could require. They found in him that openness of heart, that pleasing confidence, which so much endears friendship; but his friendship had nothing in it of that jealous and tyrannical character, which becomes so troublesome when affection degenerates into a sort of fanatical enthusiasm. Gellert sometimes selected some of his disciples to be his companions. M. Godeke, who is now a worthy and respectable minister, had, for many years, the happiness of being one of these favoured pupils; and he still speaks

of the kindness and tender affection of his former master, with as much gratitude as the master expressed satisfaction in the attachment, attentions, and agreeable society of his pupil.

Interested and vain men are eager to receive benefits, and often seek them with meanness ; or, if they receive favours unexpectedly, they receive them proudly, as a tribute paid to their merit ; but they know not what gratitude is, or, if sometimes they shew it, it is in such a manner as differs very little from ingratitude. Generous souls, on the contrary, reckon gratitude amongst their most delicious sentiments ; and Gellert possessed this characteristic of a good heart in the highest degree. Gratitude was one of the liveliest emotions of his soul. He spoke of the benefits he had received with the same warmth as the vainest benefactor could have spoken of the services he had done. Not that he was fond of presents, and still less that he sought them ; on the contrary, we have already said, that he often declined receiving them, and that he congratulated himself when he could procure them for some other person more in want of them than himself. In the good he did, he never proposed to himself the gratitude of the objects of his generosity ; they might be ungrateful with impunity, secure that no one would know it, for, on the one hand, Gellert never mentioned it,

and, on the other, he himself forgot the benefits he had bestowed, immediately after bestowing them.

Modesty and humility were the distinguishing features in Gellert's amiable character; and these qualities were the more estimable in him, as he owed them wholly to religion, and a sense of duty, and to the exact knowledge he had of his weaknesses and imperfections; for he set a high value on the public esteem, and a good reputation appeared to him a precious advantage. In his journal, it appears that, amongst the blessings of God, of which he made a recapitulation at the end of each year, he reckoned amongst the first, not having been attacked in his reputation, nor exposed to contempt and dishonour. He candidly owned, that vanity was, of all his propensities, that which he most feared, and had reason to fear; and acknowledged, with the same ingenuousness, that he had not always been sufficiently on his guard against being surprised by it. It is certainly necessary to possess a very superior mind, to enable any one to discover in themselves this propensity, so dangerous to the real perfection of man, to own it, to condemn it; but to combat in sincerity, and to overcome it, is the triumph of virtue. The esteem of his fellow-creatures was precious to Gellert, but he neither exacted it nor solicited it: he only laboured to deserve it. He loved praise from the well informed,

and from the worthy : but he received it with the modesty of a young beauty, who blushes at the admiration bestowed on her. Those who knew him personally, know that he never could divest himself of this amiable, but embarrassing habit of blushing. His writings procured him much approbation from people of taste ; the court, and the great world, gave him many flattering marks of the admiration excited in them by his talents and his virtues. But these applauses, the motives of which are sometimes equivocal, gave him less pleasure than a spontaneous expression of praise, the effusion of a virtuous and feeling heart. In his third journey to Carlsbad, being at the post-house, a good old female servant heard her master conversing with him about his writings : “ O ! ” exclaimed she, “ *are you the gentleman so much talked of, and who has written such fine books !* ” Thereupon she caught his hand, and kissed it, repeating several times ; “ *It is you, then, who have written such fine books !* ” This little adventure was certainly as flattering to Gellert, as would have been the well digested praise which might have been bestowed on his writings, by a man of the most approved taste and judgment. He was no less agreeably affected by what happened to him with a subaltern officer in the service of Prussia. This man called on him at Leipzig, and said to him : “ Excuse the liberty I take of calling on you. I am a

Prussian serjeant ; I have served thirty-three years contrary to my inclination ; and, having at length obtained my discharge, I am going back to Livonia, where I was born, and I have travelled five miles out of my road to see you, and thank you from my heart for the good you have done me ; for your writings have often withheld me from evil, and led me to virtue. May God reward you for it, bless you, grant you health, a long life, and eternal felicity ! Ah, did you but know how much I love you, and how delighted I am to see you !” These are praises and blessings which no French or German Crebillon ever received ; they can be given by none but a virtuous heart, nor deserved but by a writer who has employed his genius and his talents entirely with a view to make men better, and to render them sensible of the charms of religion and virtue.

But it was not praise alone that Gellert considered as an agreeable reward for his labours : the esteem and approbation of his fellow-creatures was so precious to him, that even criticisms, when dictated by friendship, and the desire of improving his works, gave him as much pleasure as applause : Nor was any one ever more disposed to do justice to the talents and merits of others. Those qualities which he had not, were always those he most esteemed. It became known after his death, that, when M. Ernesti was called to Gottingen,

Gellert, filled with a kind of enthusiasm for the extraordinary learning and merit of this great man, wrote to a member of state, representing to him the importance of retaining Ernesti, by offering him very considerable advantages. “*Let me be sent, if necessary, to Nova Scotia ; but let Ernesti be retained, at whatever cost.*”

Gellert did not confine himself to forming the hearts and understandings of his pupils, to inspiring them with a taste for learning by his instructions, his counsels, and his example ; he also warmly interested himself in pushing them forward in the world, and procuring them advantageous establishments. Many distinguished men, in various situations, are known to have been indebted to him for their fortune and promotion. When M. Fiedler, now Professor of Theology at Butzow, passed from the Roman Catholic church into ours, he consulted Gellert on the means of employing himself in a manner which might be useful to himself and the public. Gellert not only assisted him as much as his actual circumstances would permit, but even gave himself the trouble to perfect him in the German language, and to form his style, in the hope that it might contribute to his promotion.

Incapable of envy, he was equally free from that jealousy, which is but too common amongst those who are engaged in the same career, and was never

disturbed at seeing his rivals esteemed beyond their deserts. When the conversation turned upon his works, he never spoke of the beauties to be found in them, with that coldness, affected by false modesty, in the view of having them more highly applauded by others ; but he spoke more frequently of their faults, than of their beauties, and the candour with which he expressed himself on the subject, proved that he did not wish to engage any one to judge more favourably of his writings, than the rules of a sound, impartial, and judicious criticism would allow. However, and particularly during the last years of his life, he was even scrupulously attentive in revising and correcting his compositions. This single passage in his moral lessons, " Actually, the inhabitants of the smallest villages are better instructed in the dogma of the Unity of God, and on the duties of men, than were formerly those of Athens and of Rome." This passage occupied him several days, because he feared saying too much, or too little. Sometimes even doubts in orthography disquieted him, so great was his respect for the public, and his distrust of himself.

Gellert was much gratified by the approbation given to his writings by the fair sex, because he was of opinion, that in women, whose understandings had been cultivated by a good education, the sentiment of what is beautiful is more to be depended

on than in men, that it is more consonant to nature, and less fettered by rules of art, which are often arbitrary. "Dodderidge;" says he, in one of his letters, "has written somewhere, to the honour of women, that, perhaps, they are the best and most pious half of the human species; and, indeed, my dear count, amongst persons of singular goodness, I know fewer men than women." He particularly esteemed in them innocence and goodness of heart, and preferred these much to the advantages of an extraordinary and brilliant understanding, an advantage frequently dangerous to those who possess it. He always wished their talents to be surpassed by their modesty, and gentleness; and that from regard to custom, which seems in some degree to condemn them to ignorance, they should carefully avoid the affectation of appearing learned. He always aimed in his works at making them sensible of the charms of the gentle and social virtues; and he was rewarded for it by the fair sex considering him as their surest guide, and best friend.

That noble simplicity was visible in his manners and conversation, which generally belongs to those who are more accustomed to live with men of learning, than with the great, without being, however, entirely excluded from the society of the latter. He had nothing in his appearance of that austerity, frequently contracted by those who are chiefly em-

ployed on literary and scientific subjects. His gentle, and, at the same time, noble physiognomy, prepossessioned every one in his favour, and contributed to make his society agreeable. His continual suffering, though not able to irritate his temper, naturally weakened his courage, filled his mind with apprehensions of still greater evils, and led him to doubt of his strength and his merit.

Gellert was not, however, deficient in strength of mind, which, when collected, made him firm and courageous. He conversed with kings and princes without being disconcerted; and discovered more firmness in his last illness, than on other occasions, which did not appear so dangerous. However, in the common occurrences of life, when nothing excited him to make any particular effort, trifles gave him uneasiness, and he was alarmed by difficulties which, with more resolution, would have been easily got over. This timid disposition deterred him from all long undertakings, stifled his ambition, fixed his attention more on himself, and thus contributed to his own improvement, by withdrawing him from a croud of interruptions which would have impeded him in its pursuit. On the other hand, this timid disposition did not allow him the full enjoyment of that serenity of soul, and that calm satisfaction, which ought to be the reward of virtue.

Attention to ourselves, whether it has the body or the mind for its object, produces similar effects, and generally this double attention proceeding from the same cause, is to be found united in the same person. It occasions trifling disorders in the soul to be remarked, which would escape the observation of those more given up to the amusements and business of life. These persons neither enjoy all the comforts of health, nor all the advantages of virtue, because they are more disturbed by what is not quite as it should be, than satisfied with what is in a healthy and regular state. Thus, the attention of Gellert to both these objects, occasioned him some anxiety. He wanted that courage, which is neither disconcerted by the commission of a fault, nor the threatening of a disease ; and which, though it leads to seek the proper remedies, allows the mind calmly to wait their effects. If the tranquillity with which some people occupy themselves concerning what interests the improvement of body and mind, procures more present satisfaction, perhaps those who feel more solicitude, seek this improvement with more zeal.

Gellert was certainly well aware, that a man's situation in life cannot be put in competition with his personal qualities, and it was not possible that such a mind as his should judge otherwise : But, independently of this consideration, he gave great weight to the difference of ranks established in civil life, in-

somuch that he considered them as regulated by Providence, and felt himself so much disposed to respect the pretensions and rights of every one, that he testified the greatest regard and deference even for meer rank. In general, he was more disposed to consider every arrangement established in society, in the state, and amongst those of his own condition, as entitled to respect, and to be referred to their best possible uses, than to occupy himself with the alteration of inconveniences, which he could not but perceive to arise from them, might have suggested. He commonly supposed in his superiors, lights and views beyond those derived from science; and authority, to which he found himself subjected, almost always appeared to him good and just. Perhaps he was too fearful of every reform in the body politic, when this reform can be made without great changes; and that he had too advantageous an idea of the wisdom of the rules already established. But this excess of reserve was, possibly, also a consequence of his submission to whatever came under the description of law, and of duty; and which, making him submit his understanding and his inclinations to divine and human authority, had so much influence over all the other dispositions which formed his character.

Gellert seldom spoke of himself; when he did, it was always with that real modesty which is appre-

hensive of saying too much, though he well knew how to appreciate himself, and that he entertained such an opinion of his merit as might be allowable in a modest man.

He was particularly fond of edifying conversations ; and was never more eloquent than when he spoke of religion, of virtue, or of the good qualities of his fellow-creatures.

Such were the principles and the life of Gellert, without his ever founding his hopes of salvation on his own uprightness and piety. The following words are to be read in a confession of faith, written with his own hand. " I found on God and my Saviour my hope of dying a repenting and justified sinner, who have frequently fallen, but been recalled to virtue, by the grace of God. I do not pretend here to recapitulate my faults and my sins ; the detail would not be very edifying. God has visited me with many afflictions, what I have suffered is beyond description. A secret chagrin has pursued me, has made the exercises of prayer, and of my other duties, painful to me. Nevertheless, God has not left me without consolation, and I know that he will help me to overcome the agonies of death. May all men be exempt from the miseries I have endured ; and may God grant them to seek their wisdom, their consolation, their strength, and their salvation, wholly in the cross of our Saviour, and the Faith of the

Holy Spirit! I particularly conjure those belonging to me, who may not be present at my last moments, to persevere all their lives in the fear of the Lord, and to look upon religion as the only means of passing their days in peace, and closing them with a calm and salutary death."

The life of Gellert offers to our contemplation a good man struggling with misfortunes; few mortals have suffered more than Gellert, but as all is compensated, few mortals have been more useful. All, however, is not compensated here below beyond a certain point; and to those who do not believe in the efficacy of religion, and who deny the existence of a future state, the life and the death of Gellert must remain an inexplicable phenomenon. A Christian, a prey to long sufferings, and who, far from allowing himself to be overcome by them, is but the more actively engaged in combating his passions, in rectifying his inclinations, in exercising obscure virtues, which are only witnessed by his conscience; this Christian, lying on his death-bed, forgetting the pains he endures, and only occupying his mind with the blessings he hopes for, furnishes a fresh proof of the truth of Christianity. Can any one deny the existence of a cause, who beholds effects which cannot be attributed to any other than that cause? Surely, the consequences to be drawn from Gellert's

life by an attentive reader, must fortify his faith against the attacks of the infidels.

Many people, in reading the life of Gellert, have been painfully affected by the idea of the almost incredible sufferings and melancholy, experienced by this man, who was so pious, and so good; who chiefly delighted in glorifying and imitating the author of his being, by spreading happiness around him. But if Gellert had been less an object of compassion, he would certainly have been less great, less admired, and, of course, less useful. His benevolent and pure soul would only have possessed virtues easily exercised; he would have captivated the affections, not the admiration, of his cotemporaries; a tribute only to be granted to virtues of the first order, and which require great efforts, or sacrifices.

Exempted from sufferings, would he have been qualified to compose works, in which he turns the experience derived from distress to the advantage of others? Would he have so well understood the proper language in which to address the unfortunate; in order to soften their afflictions, by shewing them their use, if he himself had not been instructed in the school of adversity? Few masters have done so much good to their pupils. How happens this? It is because every thing united to give weight to his lessons; an example of the most difficult virtues were seen at all times accompanying the precept;

the celebrity of the master impressed respect ; his assiduous care excited a tender gratitude ; and a lively feeling of compassion added strength to all these sentiments. Moreover, let us not lose sight of the pleasure which, in some sort, compensated his sufferings ; what author, what master, what friend, has ever tasted more pure and lively pleasures, arising from the success of his lessons and his works, which all had in view to improve mankind in virtue and happiness ?

So good, so pious a man was worthy, as much as a mortal can be, to go out of this world with a firm hope of possessing the heavenly blessings, after which he had so much aspired ; he who had constantly employed his days, full of bitterness, in contributing to the pleasures and happiness of others ; he, who may be considered as a rare and precious gift bestowed by Heaven on his country, whose taste, morals, and virtues he improved.

Some of his auditors, and some of his friends, have caused a monument to be erected to him in the church in which he desired to be buried. Religion is seen presenting to Virtue a medallion of Gellert, crowned with laurels. Both the statues are of alabaster. On the pedestal, which is of black marble, is engraved his name, CHRETIEN FURCHTEGOTT GELLERT ; and under it this inscription, by M. Heyne : “ *He taught virtue and religion by his les-*

sons, and by his example. Some of his friends and contemporaries, witnesses of his merit, have erected this monument to his memory. Born July 4th, 1715; died December 13th, 1769."

Professor Oeser erected also a fine monument of Saxon marble, to his memory; which still adorns the garden of Wendler.

The graves in which Gellert, and the one of his brothers, whose death quickly followed his, are interred, are covered with a plain stone, bearing this simple inscription :

"Here repose CHRISTIEN FURCHTEGOTT GELLERT, Professor of Philosophy; born July 4th, 1715; died December 13th, 1769; and his brother, FREDERIC LEBRECHT GELLERT, Intendant of the Posts; born November 11th, 1711; died January 8th, 1770."

Thus the friends and pupils of Gellert have sought to honour his memory. Nothing is more uncertain than the fate of works of genius in future times : The admiration they excite, and the immortality we dare to promise them, is subject to the revolutions of taste; but the true glory of Gellert, that which results from his moral character, is as permanent as Religion and Virtue, and can have no other limit than Eternity.

END OF THE LIFE OF GELLERT.

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION.

MANY people condemn Religion, without knowing in what it consists ; and a still greater number respect it, without knowing it better. I am not certain whether the contempt of the first sort of persons, or the seeming respect of the second, is most offensive to religion ; but if I were asked which of the two is most injurious to it, I should, without hesitation, say the last. The declared enemies of religion, by venomous raillery, sarcasms, and all the accusations they invent against it, can in nothing diminish its real beauty, and very seldom deprive it of any of its sincere and reasonable partisans. The audaciousness of its declared enemies, is detested ; they are considered as the enemies of mankind, as contradicting, with insolent pride, the general voice

of sentiment and reason, and they excite, at the same time, our abhorrence and compassion. The sentiment of right and wrong, of just and unjust, engraven by the Almighty on the human heart, though weakened by our own fault, and by the corruption of our nature, has still too much weight to allow of its being totally effaced by the impressions of impiety and libertinism, which rash mortals seek, and sometimes with success, to make on our souls. They may surprise an honest heart, and, for a time, obscure its light by their sophisms ; but all the arts of imposture, can never attain to destroying in us the feelings of conscience, and the sacred seeds of truth and virtue. He who is in us, is more powerful than he who is in them. Many men are deprived of the advantages arising from genius and science ; can we suppose that God has left them without defence against the attacks of infidelity ? No ; an inward sense of right is their defence. Let the infidels, or, rather, to use the expressions of Scripture, let the fools say, there is no God, no Religion, no essential difference between vice and virtue. Let them profane whatever is most sacred ; let their impious lips insult with arrogance the eternal laws of justice, and of order ; religion loses nothing of its dignity, nor are the charms of virtue lessened in the eyes of those to whom they have been well known. Not only He who inhabits the Heavens laughs at

the subtilties of these pretended sages, but, amongst the human beings he has created, for one madman who insults him, how many are there who glorify him in sincerity of heart, and in whom we still perceive the august image of the Divinity ! Being Supreme ! Does not one single glance over the works produced by thy power, confound all the arguments of the infidel who would steal thee from our adoration ? What, my God ! Can thy existence be doubtful, whilst I cannot reflect either on myself, or on the objects by which I am surrounded, without conceiving an eternal cause of the wisdom, power, order, magnificence, and beauty, which are manifested in myself, and in the beings which surround me ? Thou, my God ! that thou shouldst be supposed not to exist ? And yet the proofs of thy existence are multiplied to infinitude ! In vain I endeavour to conceive an universe without a first cause ; I revolt from the idea, and my heart opposes it with invincible resistance. But if thou art the author of the human race, and of all that exists, if I am thy creature, and if I derive from thee every advantage I possess, canst thou have abandoned me to myself ? Hast thou left me to be my own master ; can I be at liberty to make what use I please of the faculties of my body and mind ? I can direct them in divers manners : can the use I make of them be indifferent, whether it tends to the happiness or misery of

my brethren, to make me happy or miserable? When I impose silence on my passions, I hear a voice which cries out to me, this is just, this is unjust. Whence comes this voice? No matter, I will follow its doctrines; if I err, it will be on the authority of reason. But no; this language is too divine to be that of error: it tells me that the Almighty, to whom I owe my existence, should be feared and venerated above all beings; and that it is on doing this that consists all my duty and my happiness. I consult revelation; it confirms this oracle, and changes the too feeble glimmering of reason into a bright and luminous day-light, and allows me to perceive as many rays of the Supreme Majesty, as my timid sight can permit me to endure. Therein I discover what God is, and I learn what I am. Love, mercy, power, justice, holiness, and wisdom, constitute his essence. And what are men? One of the works of his hands, created to imitate his perfections as far as their nature will allow, and to enjoy the happiness of God himself. O mortal! consult revelation; contemplate the Divinity in this faithful mirror, and thou wilt find whatever is necessary to thy happiness, if thou considerest it with an attentive eye. Thou wert created for eternity; this life is a preparation for it. The world thou inhabitest is a state of trial. The years of thy pilgrimage, are years of that obedience which

thou art called upon to pay to thy Creator, in order to become worthy of the glory he has designed for thee, and has acquired for thee at the price of the merits, righteousness, and blood of thy divine Saviour, his only son. Clouds still hang over the divine mysteries of this revelation : but let not this alarm thee, and do not form the rash wish of dispelling them. How, indeed, couldst thou do it? By the help of reason? Go, and renounce the idea of fathoming the impenetrable, and eternal decrees of Divine Wisdom. Who art thou, who dare to undertake it? Think on thy insignificance, and adore the plans of mercy. The mysteries of faith are above thy reason to comprehend : thou art not obliged to comprehend, in order to believe them ; it is enough if thou understandest the proofs on which they are founded, and that they teach thee that these are of divine origin. Admire, and let a religious dread fill thy soul, at the idea of a Saviour God, who was a man like ourselves, excepting in sin ; subject, like us, to the wants and weaknesses of humanity ; exposed to the same temptations ; conversing on earth as a meer mortal ; going from place to place doing good ; and, nevertheless, knowing not where to rest his head : shudder at the thought, that the wise and the foolish, the great and the little, united in persecuting and despising him ; that, at length, fallen under the power of

these barbarous creatures, who were his brethren, he experienced all the torments which can be known to virtue ; that he was a prey to all kinds of outrage ; that the impious beings, who derived from him their breath and life, blasphemed against him ; that he was placed in the rank of malefactors, and that, undergoing the most cruel death, he was even deprived of the consolation not refused to the greatest criminal—the melancholy consolation of being pitied ; of being pitied even by his companions in torment—and that he exclaimed on the cross ; “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !* ” Be seized with astonishment at this idea ; and, if so many insults and humiliations lead thee to doubt whether Jesus Christ was sent from God, turn thy mind to the excellency of his doctrine ; to the sanctity of his life ; to the divine constancy with which he supported so many outrages and sufferings ; to the greatness of soul which, in the midst of the most cruel torments, still interests him in favour of his tormentors, and dictates to him this prayer ; “ *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* ” Dost thou still see nothing in him beyond a simple mortal ? Well, then, consider the prodigies which accompanied his life, his death, and the establishment of his doctrine ; say, dost thou perceive nothing of divine in these considerations ? He dies as a man, if thou viewest him on the cross : but why does the sun lose its light at

this moment ? Why does the earth tremble ? Why do the dead come forth from the graves ? Is the Saviour a mere man, when he rises as he had foretold, full of life from the bosom of the earth, when, after having, during forty days, demonstrated this new existence, he disappears in a cloud from the sight of his brethren, abandons the earthly habitation, and mounts triumphantly to Heaven ? Is he a mere man, when he sends his promised gifts to his disciples, the supernatural gifts of the Spirit of God ; when he again appears in the road to Damascus, and that environed by a divine light, he strikes the sight of his most ardent adversary, who, at his call, becomes his most intrepid confessor ?

If thou requirest other proofs, think on the accomplishment of so many predictions regarding him, and which, many ages before, described even every particular circumstance of his life ; think of the oracles which he pronounced himself, and accomplished, relative to the destruction of the city in which he suffered death, in relation to the misfortunes and dispersion of the people who condemned him, and the miraculous preservation of that same people, of which we are at this day eye-witnesses ; reflect on the wonders performed by a handful of obscure persons, every where despised and contradicted, who have been enabled to spread the doctrine of a crucified Saviour ; the sanctity of which doctrine re-

strained the propensities of nature ; combated the prejudices of the Jews, and of the Heathens ; over-set the established worship, and confounded pride and false wisdom ; was not supported by the powers of eloquence or authority ; promised neither honours, riches, nor earthly pleasures, but announced in this life persecutions, crosses, and death ; and yet its followers and martyrs increased every where. Answer these proofs, and so many others, are they not sufficiently strong, sufficiently clear to engage thy belief in the mystery of redemption, sacred mystery ! which even the intelligence of seraphims would not enable thee to comprehend ? If thou perceivest a contradiction in the Saviour being both God and man, I own that thou wouldst not be obliged to believe it ; for God does not exact that we should admit as true, what contradicts that reason which he has given us for a guide.

But if thou findest only that this union is incomprehensible, reflect that thou art a man, and that thou canst not comprehend how thy soul is united with the body, though thou art sensible the union exists. How much more must the union of the divine and the human nature, ever remain a mystery to thee ! If there exists a doctrine better suited to the dignity of our being, more fit to secure the repose of mankind, more fit to satisfy our insatiable thirst after happiness, than the doctrine of Jesus

Christ ; if there exists any one which inspires more moderation in prosperity, more comfort in misfortune, and which can better appease the terrors of conscience, the fear of death, judgment, and eternity ; if there exists any more certain means of freeing thyself from vain illusions, of freeing thee from the empire of thy senses and passions, from pride and error ; in a word, if there exists a more easy and certain way of making us wise, happy, and contented here below, and eternally happy in the life to come, prefer it without balancing, despise religion, it has not God for its author, if there exists any better mode of leading us to felicity. But if this better mode does not exist, and that thou rejectest that which I present to thee, in spite of the circumstances which attest the divinity of its origin, thou no longer deservest, on account of thus misunderstanding thy dearest interests, to be reckoned amongst reasonable beings. Is it the difficulty of knowing and practising religion, which makes thee renounce it ? If so, renounce also every human science, for not one can be learnt and exercised, without trouble. Perhaps thou thinkest that, if God had given a religion which had favoured thy propensities, and which had, in all respects, been the opposite to the Christian, thou shouldst have been happier. Is it possible that thou canst seriously form such a wish ? Wouldst thou inhabit a world peopled with ravishers, adulterers, murderers,

drunkards, calumniators, and misers ? Shouldst thou expect to find peace and happiness in such a society ? Can it be necessary to thy well-being to know thou hast nothing to hope for after death ? But that, at the end of a career, thick sown with troubles and miseries, wouldst thou be satisfied to have lived ; or, rather, wouldst thou not, in expiring, curse the first day of thy miserable existence ? Reflect attentively, and thou wilt be convinced that religion, as a means of happiness to us here and hereafter, must, of necessity, lead us to faith, to piety, to the love of God and of our neighbour. If, however, thou still persistest in despising it, most assuredly thou knowest not that religion, thou knowest not thyself.

To despise what we are unacquainted with, is absurd ; would it be more reasonable to respect an object we do not know ? Many people know how to pay all exterior homage to religion ; full of zeal for the cause, their discourse tends to honour and defend it ; the prospect of scaffolds, and of death, could scarcely tempt them to apostacy ; and yet, notwithstanding all these fine outward appearances, they cease not from dishonouring religion by the disorders of their lives. If it is possible that such Christians should know the Evangelical doctrines, it must be also possible that the blind may enjoy light. The end of religion is to rectify our ideas ; to purify and regulate our inclinations ; to submit them, as

well as our actions, to the laws of reason and virtue ; to reconcile us to ourselves ; to make us resemble God, and thus to conduct us to happiness. He who conceives not this to be the aim of religion, assuredly knows not religion as it ought to be known ; even were all its dogmas, and all its precepts, to be deeply impressed on his memory. How many people are there, however, who, if we may judge of them by their conduct, view Christianity merely as a source of consolation, which they ought not to let slip, and never think of the engagements into which it has made them enter. If this is to know religion, no science is easier, and nothing more absurd than using much effort to improve in it. For the idea of a Saviour who will pardon me, notwithstanding the sins I commit, and those I intend further to commit ; this idea costs so little to maintain, that all men may promise themselves salvation, if it was to be obtained by such a chimerical conviction. Be our knowledge of the human heart ever so small, it is easy for us to feel how much this profane homage paid to religion, would be injurious to the progress of virtue.

But why are so few people acquainted with religion ? Perhaps as many particular causes for this might be alleged, as there are persons who profess it. One of the chief of these reasons is, the little attention paid to the study of it, at a mature age

The science of religion, in this respect, like all other human sciences, requires to be seized on by the understanding, before we can appropriate it to ourselves by exercise and practice. But does there exist any science, however easy, which can be attained without application and endeavours to that purpose? Shall we not expose ourselves to forget any science we have acquired, if we neglect to view it frequently, in all its different branches, and to renew, by reflection, those impressions of which the distractions of life have made us lose sight? How happens it that we do not act thus in regard to religion? Is it that religion is not worthy of this attention; or has God promised to infuse its dogmas into our mind, by an immediate act of his power, and to keep us in the faith concerning its truths, without our giving ourselves the trouble of acting? Is it enough that we have learnt the terms of religion in our youth? And can we, with the very best instructions, at that age in which the judgment is so little formed, attain a full sense of its sublimity? Suppose even this were possible, will not these lessons of wisdom we shall have received, be forgotten amidst the cares and pleasures of life? And will not the impression they have made on our hearts be obliterated, by degrees, by a thousand others, foreign to those made by religious instruction? Will our conviction of the excellence and divinity of re-

ligion, preserve its energy in a mind, much occupied by earthly cares and projects, and continually agitated by a thousand desires, no way related to wisdom and virtue? Were we possessed of the richest treasures of knowledge and wisdom, as long as our souls are united to these bodies, they will ever be in danger of allowing themselves to be drawn aside by imagination, and subjected to the influences of the senses; stunned by the tumult of the world, enslaved by pleasures, or depressed by misfortunes, every thing calls it off from invisible objects, and virtue is every where exposed to meet with obstacles and enemies. This is what Scripture teaches us, and what is confirmed to us every day by the example of the greatest saints, and our own experience. Why, then, do we not act according to this experience, and apply ourselves habitually to acquire more and more knowledge of religion, since we are habitually exposed to lose something of that which we have acquired? Can there be a plainer or more evident truth than this; an advantage which may be lost, and the possession of which is highly essential to my happiness, ought to be preserved with care; an advantage, which diminishes in value, the moment I do not seek to increase it, ought to be unremittingly cultivated. The man of the meanest capacity, conducts himself by this rule in the common exercises of life. How happens it, then, that this

invariable rule of reason is not applied to our spiritual concerns? What! shall religion, the object of the highest importance, that great business of mortals, require only a lukewarm soul, and inattentive mind, whilst the most frivolous occupations of the age we live in, demand care and vigilance! A wise man proportions the pains he takes, to the degree of advantage he expects; how happens it, then, that we do not apply ourselves with more zeal to religion, which has the promises of this present life, and of that which is to come? But to obtain these promises, we must strive, without ceasing; and, as the Scripture expresses it, "*hold fast what we have attained, lest our crown, (that blessed hope founded on the grace of the Almighty) should be taken from us.*"

One of the most fatal prejudices against religion, is to view it as a severe guide, who interdicts all commerce with the world, and all the pleasures of life. Some think it necessary to be enemies to themselves, in order to be friends to virtue; and to cease to be men, in order to become Christians. Can men represent the Deity to themselves under such a terrible aspect! Is God the tyrant of his creatures? And does he not rather wish them to be as happy as it is possible for them to be? That God, who has placed me in a world adorned with so many beauties, and who has formed me so as to be continually susceptible of impression from them, can he wish me

to behold them with insensibility, and forbid me in this world every pleasing sensation? What a strange contradiction! But religion, it will be said, forbids many pleasures. I allow it; but what are these pleasures? None of those which are found to be compatible with the peace of our minds, and the constitution of our bodies, the happiness of society, and our eternal felicity. Let man consider himself as a creature endowed with an immortal spirit, who, placed on earth, proceeds and advances rapidly towards another world, towards a perfect happiness, which will never end; and then let him decide whether religion embitters, or sweetens, our present existence. Impurity, gluttony, envy, avarice, vengeance, and pride, are passions which religion condemns; and I own these vices are sometimes productive of pleasure. But we must be very weak, or much blinded by our propensities, not to see that the evils they occasion, sooner or later, are infinitely greater than the fleeting satisfactions they procure. Can it be said that religion deprives us of true pleasure, when she subjugates or directs uneasy and violent desires, which grow in proportion to the gratification allowed them? It forbids impurity, and allows the enjoyment of virtuous love; is this an austere religion? forbids avarice, and teaches us to love earthly goods only in as much as they serve to make this transient life more agreeable: Is this a

severe doctrine? It will not allow us to make our chief glory consist merely in the praises and approbation of mortals, who are as weak and short-sighted as ourselves; but it leads us to aspire after peace of conscience, the approbation of those immortal spirits, who, cloathed with justice and holiness, surround the throne of the Most High; to the favour of Jesus Christ, who is perfection itself, and who alone can judge of it; in a word, to that celestial glory, which God alone bestows; and thus teaches us to seek felicity in virtue, and not in frivolous or perishable advantages. Can such a religion be accused of severity? Lord open our eyes to the wonders of thy law, and make us comprehend that, if thou prescribe virtue, it is to make us happy; and because, without it, even thyself, Almighty Power! thou thyself wouldst cease to be God.

All things well considered, the pleasures of which religion deprives us, are nothing in comparison of those of which it is the source. It not only delights the understanding by its beauty, but touches and moves the soul; and, by these means, becomes capable of attracting all men under its dominion, because there is no one who is not able to feel its efficacy, and taste that peace which it infuses into the heart. All things well considered, the efforts and struggles exacted by virtue, are nothing in comparison of the misery and torment which are the

consequences of vice. It is painful, I allow, to sacrifice our dearest inclinations ; but do we offer this sacrifice to virtue as vile slaves obey a tyrannical master, or is it an exchange of some frivolous and transient pleasures, in consideration of obtaining immutable and infinite advantages ? Can we after this think ourselves to be pitied, for submitting our hearts to the laws of religion ? Is it not rather a heart sanctified by it, which is best fitted to taste all the pleasures of life, because it is then secure of one day, possessing those of eternity ? What ! is the liberty of living an irregular life so great a good, when at the review of his disorderly conduct, the sinner, shuddering, says to himself that perhaps he may be eternally miserable, that he exposes himself to the vengeance of a God, who would cease to be God, if he were not infinite in justice, as well as in mercy, and who has declared to mankind, that it is impossible for him to make those happy who rebel against him ? Pleasures which make us look to death with terror, are disavowed by reason, and these are the only ones, from which we are debarred by religion. In short, after having made our lives sweet and peaceful, religion makes our death easy, and even desirable. We are all destined to die, we tremble at the fatal blow, which may happen from one moment to another ; and shall we refuse to attach ourselves to a religion, which sweetens the bit-

terness of death, and assists us to obtain Heaven? Every thing must be easy and supportable to him who fears not death. If religion elevate us to a degree of heroism to which neither nature, art, nor philosophy can raise us, can we view it without the profoundest respect, and without devoting to it that attention, that care, and those efforts which are due to the only means we have of becoming constantly happy? I cannot believe it, and am rather persuaded that most men are unacquainted with religion, and that they are so because they do not wish to know it.

ON THE
EXCELLENCY AND ADVANTAGES
OF
DEVOTION.

MANY people despise devotion to such a degree, as to consider it merely as the portion of those insignificant souls, whose intelligence is very weak and confined. It is, however, certain, that a want of devotion betrays precisely a soul of this order, and that wherever it is found, a noble and feeling heart may be supposed to exist. To prove this it will be sufficient to examine the nature of devotion, and the sources from whence it derives its influence over the minds and conduct of men.

Without a just idea of God, and his infinite perfections, there can be no true devotion, since a lively sentiment of the greatness and goodness of the Supreme Being, constitutes its essence. It is devo-

tion which often recalls to our memory, and deeply impresses on our mind, the idea of the attributes, the works, the mercies, and the laws of God, such as they are discovered to us by nature, and revelation. It is devotion which awakens in our hearts sentiments of respect, love, confidence, and gratitude, of the humility, and submission which accompany these ideas, when they are frequently and in a lively manner present to us, and that we meditate on them attentively. For it is not sufficient to produce true devotion, that we even employ our thoughts on God frequently. If mere curiosity, or the mere obligation we are under of fulfilling the duties of our situation, fixes the mind on religious ideas, without the heart being more engaged in them, than it would be on indifferent objects, we are as far from piety as those hypocrites who from human motives adopt its appearance, without being animated with its spirit.

But devotion requires not only that our ideas concerning God and Religion should be lively, it also requires, they should be just. When truth does not enlighten our understandings, the affections of our hearts cannot be real and sincere. To flatter ourselves that we experience certain pious emotions without a just and clear idea of God, such as become his nature, is to possess an imaginary devo-

tion, a sacred hypocrisy, or it is the pious error of a weak mind ; neither are we animated by the spirit of devotion, but by a fanatical ardour, when we view God and his attributes in a false light, and by this excite in our minds unworthy ideas of the Supreme Being and his august perfections. To whom then does the glorious title of a pious man belong ? To him only who considers the divinity, such as reason and revelation exhibit it to us, who in retirement, silence, and recollection, calls up his powers and seeks in the holy scriptures, or in some other pious writing, or in his own meditations, the remembrance of God, of his perfections, of his works, of his mercies, and of his laws ; who frequently employs his mind on these ideas, and always in the noble and pious intention of awakening in his soul those sentiments to which they are so well fitted to give birth. To attain this end, he is not satisfied with considering the objects of religion in a general point of view, but he applies them to himself, and examines what relation they bear to him in particular ; and gives himself up with joy to the impressions they excite in his soul the moment they arise. It is then that he elevates a heart to God, entirely filled with the idea of him, that he engages in a kind of discourse, in an intimate connection with the Supreme Being, and presents to him at one time the homage of praise and adoration, at another a hymn

of gratitude; or, in the language of a son who lays his wants before his father, uses the expressions of an humble repentance, and the promise to continue faithful to him for ever. In a word, he not only thinks of God, but seeks him, converses with him, and unveils his whole soul in his august presence.

Let me ask now, what is there of weak or trifling in such acts of the mind? Is it the object they have in view? But what is greater than God, than that infinite Being, who possesses in the highest degree, all that is sublime, all that is good, all that is worthy of admiration and love. He who is the source of perfection, the creator and master of nature, the Almighty; he to whom we owe existence and life, and on whom depends our happiness or misery. This is the God we contemplate when animated by devotion, this is the God we adore in that splendour of glory and goodness, which reason and the more brilliant light of revelation set before us.

We reflect on the wonders he has performed in our favour, on the admirable manner in which he has formed us, on his paternal care which preserves and protects us; we feel that each moment of our existence is his gift, and that to become happy, we can do nothing better than to learn and fulfil his laws, since his will is nothing but wisdom, goodness and a desire to bring us to happiness. We reflect that each act of disobedience to his laws, is an out-

rage, a rebellion against him ; we consider how holy he is, what sinners we are in his sight, how greatly our nature is corrupted, and what ineffable love he has shewn us in redeeming us by his son. To occupy our minds often with such ideas, to think of them with sensibility, to meditate on them with attention, is this the employment of a feeble mind ? No, he who thinks the knowledge of God a trifling science, and our endeavours to improve in it a weakness, would be more than unwise, he would assimilate himself to the brutes. We cannot be virtuous without the knowledge of God ; this is a truth as clear as that we cannot see light, when we are deprived of the organs necessary to perceive it. What then can be more unreasonable, than to prefer a thousand frivolous kinds of knowledge, which serve only to satisfy a vain curiosity, to the knowledge of God and of his will ? Surely, we must be void of reason, not to know how to appreciate the intrinsic worth of things, to consider a trifle as a treasure, and to count for nothing, what every wise man would consider as his best treasure. What should we say of one who should prefer the possession of a flower, whose beauty fades in a few hours, to the possession of the whole world ? Do those act more wisely, who rather desire to instruct themselves in the means of pleasing men, than to learn by what means they can acquire the divine approbation ?

Devotion requires that our senses should be detached from outward objects, that our minds should be composed, that our passions should be silent, that our souls should be elevated above things visible. In order to this we must gain a power over ourselves, a love for truth, an attentive mind, and a lively imagination. Why then should we entertain an idea, that devotion is generally the portion of weak minds? We do not call that person guilty of weakness who, in order to acquit himself well in his employment, reflects frequently on what is requisite to his so doing, who sacrifices his pleasures, in order to impress more strongly on his mind, the importance of his vocation, and to measure the full extent of the duties it imposes. How comes it then that that man should be looked upon as weak who, being a Christian, meditates attentively on the grandeur of his destination and the duties it requires of him?

One of the principal duties of devotion is the examination of our own heart. No one can adore God in spirit and in truth, implore his forgiveness of his faults, entreat his assistance with ardour, trust in the merits of the Redeemer, and tranquilise his conscience by faith, without applying to himself the divine precepts, without examining the various deviations from duty of which he has been guilty. But to search into that heart with sincerity which

naturally inclined to pride shuns all scrutiny, to penetrate into its most secret recesses, and judge its propensities at the tribunal of conscience and revelation, surely this is not the effort of a feeble mind? What does the christian do when he examines himself in his hours of devotion? He unveils his heart in the presence of the omniscient Being; he acknowledges his errors for what they are; and notwithstanding the resistance made by his heart, he has the courage to consider a bad action in its origin and its consequences, to weigh all its attending circumstances, and thus to determine in what degree it is criminal. He strives to expiate by his regret every impure thought; to condemn every excess in inclinations otherwise allowable, and to view his vicious propensities, (propensities so dear to nature) as the shame and disease of the soul. Is this the occupation of the feeble minded? And when he pursues this examination, and that, in the presence of God, he casts his eyes on the good he has done or wished to do, that he recalls to mind a laudable design, a noble sacrifice to virtue, or an act of compassion and of charity, and that he enjoys these recollections with a sentiment of gratitude to God; when feeling the value of his virtues and recounting to himself the progress he has made in well doing, he is careful at the same time to repress every emotion of pride, to keep his heart humble towards God

and man, to deplore his weakness and imperfections, to desire continually to grow better, to regret sincerely not having done enough for God ; are these the sentiments and the efforts of a common soul ? And what shall we call greatness of mind, if such dispositions are called base and mean ?

To acquire the knowledge of all that is great and noble in devotion, let us consider it in its views and its effects. It seems no less a purpose than to make us grow in wisdom, in virtue, in faith, and in charity ; to augment our zeal for virtue and our horror for vice. Devotion awakens our trust in God, raises our courage in danger, secures consolations to us in misfortunes, teaches us moderation in prosperity, and confirms us in an entire submission to all the decrees of providence. Thus devotion makes the Christian more prudent, more wise, more useful to society. It improves him in the exercise of all his duties ; inspires him with strength and vigilance in all the occurrences of life. Above all it draws us near to God, accustoms our minds to dwell on the world to come ; enables us to triumph over death, by the hope of a heavenly felicity, and raising us by the sublime idea of our redemption, above the sphere of terrestrial objects, makes us even here below citizens of heaven. Can the man who gives his mind to an occupation from which he reaps such great advantages be said to discover an inferior un-

derstanding? Since when has the endeavour after happiness, and particularly after the happiness of our souls, ceased to be an important object? When a hero called upon to defend his country, employs every means of inflaming his courage, and calls forth all his powers to resist or weaken the enemy; if he is calm in the moment of danger, if even his faults serve him as lessons, and that thus he makes use of every means to save his country, shall his praises be celebrated and his name revered; and shall the Christian, who has his eternal happiness, his celestial country in view, and who applies with the same zeal and vigilance to improve himself and his fellow creatures in faith and virtue, shall the Christian be exposed to contempt? To have received intelligence, liberty, conscience, and revelation, and appear insensible to the true interests of our souls, to prefer wordly honour, perishable riches, and sensual pleasures, to the approbation of God, to a treasure of good works, to peace of mind, and to the expectation of an everlasting felicity, is to be as foolish as that monarch would be, who, called upon to govern a numerous people, and endowed with the necessary qualities for filling this glorious vocation, would think it more noble to acquire skill in a trifling game, than to labour in procuring the happiness of mankind.

As to those who call in question the happy effects

of devotion which I have described, I must desire them to consider the nature of our souls, and the nature of devotion. First of all we must beware of believing that our being pious and devout can be any advantage to God ; that when we occupy ourselves in reflecting on him, on his will, on his works, we do him any real service ; that like the great ones of this world, it is glorious for him that we should testify our respect and our love towards him, that we should express our regret at having offended him, and our desire of conforming ourselves in future to the laws he has given us. God is not like man ; he sees our thoughts from far, he reads what was in the hearts of all men, before he called one into existence. He has no need of our homage and respect, as the monarchs of the earth have of that of their subjects. The sacrifice of our prayers, our hymns, our most religious meditations contribute nothing more to his felicity, than thousands of burnt offerings, and the most superb temples. Reason, however, tells us, that we owe to God the homage of our hearts, and himself in his holy word prescribes prayer and devotion as our indispensable duty. Why this ? Not only because devotion and prayer are perfectly suited to the relation in which we stand to God, as his creatures, and his children, but also, and still more, because our Heavenly Father, who always intends our happiness in the duties he imposes

on us, sees that devotion and prayer are excellent means for making us wiser and more virtuous.

When we frequently and solemnly present ourselves before God, when we meditate on the holy and sublime truths of Religion, and banishing from our minds all earthly thoughts, we employ them wholly on those advantages which will accompany us in the world to come, when we reflect on the love with which God honours us, and on the tender cares of that good Providence who daily provides for our wants, who watches with parental care over all his creatures and over us individually. When we frequently recall to our minds, his omniscience, his infinite power, and the perfection of his holiness, when not only we meditate on this great Being, and on his adorable perfections, but also that we express our thoughts to him, that we speak to him, and converse with him ; then, not only do we improve in the knowledge of God, but it becomes more lively and powerful in our hearts, in proportion as its object is more present to us, by the intimate communion of our souls with him. His perfections incite us to virtue ; our respect, our love, our gratitude, and our trust increase in degree. Would it be possible that a Christian, who frequently reflects devoutly on the salvation acquired for him by the blood of the Son of God, who meditates respectfully on the divine majesty of the Redeemer, and on the vo-

luntary humiliation to which he reduced himself to make us eternally happy, would it be possible for such a Christian not to conceive a sovereign horror for sin, of which Jesus Christ underwent the punishment ; and could he do otherwise than feel his heart enflamed with a holy love for his Saviour, or help forming the noble desire of practising those virtues which the doctrine of the Son of God, his example, his life, and his death, teach and command us to perform ? When in our hours of devotion, we recollect the threats and promises of the Lord, will not this recollection animate our endeavours to become holy as God is holy ? Will not the examination we make in the presence of God, of our heart and of our conduct, the sense and avowal of our daily faults, lead us to be more vigilant over ourselves, to correct the faults with which we reproach ourselves, to resist temptations more effectually, and to implore the assistance of divine grace with more humility and ardour ?

When the Christian begins his day saying to himself with an entire conviction ; God exists, God governs the world, all things are subject to him, there exists no creature however small, however weak, it may be, who is not under his eyes, and under his conduct ; he has counted even the hairs of our heads, and all things concur to the good of those who love him ; these thoughts in which his mind has

been engaged in the morning, will frequently recur in the course of the day, they will strengthen him in the dangers to which he may be exposed, console him in those adversities which may overtake him, make him more firm, more patient, preserve him from melancholy and despair, or at least enable him to overcome them.

When in my hours of retirement, I return God thanks for all the temporal blessings I hold from him, and for the eternal felicity he designs me; or, which is the same thing, when recollecting his mercies, I feel my happiness and my unworthiness, will not this sentiment become the foundation of a profound humility, and a sincere obedience? When on examining myself under the eye of God, I am obliged to acknowledge that I have indulged an evil thought, or entertained and fomented an inclination which is displeasing to God, will not this humiliating confession produce true repentance, repentance a pious and firm resolution, and resolution a real amendment? And when I again examine myself, can I with confidence present myself before God, if my preceding examination has been unfruitful, if I discover in myself no change for the better, and if I always appear before my Heavenly Father guilty of the same faults?

When in these moments of devotion we contemplate God in all his greatness and ourselves in our

nothingness, and that our very prayers are a confession of our unworthiness, of our impotence, and of our wants, it will be difficult for pride to find room in a mind employed in such thoughts as these. If at this moment the Christian recollects that his brother has been created, redeemed and preserved by the same God as himself, that both owe unmerited gifts to the same benefactor, will he be tempted to despise this brother, who has received fewer gifts than he has obtained, and will he refuse to support and assist him? He who renews and fortifies the love of God in his heart, awakens in it at the same time the love of his neighbour. He disposes himself to adopt a spirit of gentleness and modesty, as well as to exercise the duties of compassion and benevolence. But if devotion is the path of wisdom, and a means of making present and efficacious to our minds the sublime truths of religion, of increasing our conviction of our duties, of instructing us more fully in the state of our heart, in a word of establishing us in the love and fear of God, it is then an infallible means of promoting our peace of mind and leading us to eternal happiness; the habitual use of which, such as I have described it, will ever be the distinguishing mark of an elevated soul, fully enlightened as to its true interests, whilst the contempt and neglect of this salutary practice, discover a base soul, entirely devoted to sensual objects.

I shall add to these reflections some remarks on the time we ought to consecrate to devotion, and on the manner of fulfilling its duties. The holy scripture does not determine the number of hours we ought to employ in it. But when it exhorts us, *to pray without ceasing*, it is plain that our acts of devotion should be frequent. I own that God has not placed us in this world to pass our lives in retirement and meditation. It is certainly his will that we should spend a considerable portion of our time in providing for the necessities and conveniences of life, and he has presented to us a multitude of duties, as well with regard to our neighbours as with regard to ourselves; in a word he commands us to labour as well as to pray. His intention cannot therefore be, that we should attend to the exercises of devotion so as to injure our temporal affairs.

The mother of a family who is called to superintend her house, to educate her children, to soften the fatigues her husband may be exposed to in his vocation, and who, however, thinks herself obliged to consecrate the greatest part of the day to devotion, is ill instructed in her duty, impressed with false notions of piety, and even liable to destroy its end and utility. She should be pious the better to perform her duties of wife and mother, and, by a strange error, she becomes a bad wife and a bad mother, in order to perform the duties of devotion. The state-

man, who at the moment he is wanted by his country, thinks he ought to refuse it his attention, because he has not yet performed his devotions, would be as much mistaken as to the nature of piety, as the physician would be, who, under pretence of consecrating his early hours to God, should neglect to save the life of a sick person. It is however, incontestable, that those whom God hath placed in different circumstances, whose vocations are less laborious, and whose business is less pressing, are for this reason called upon to devote a more considerable share of their time to pious exercises. But however this is, no life is so fully occupied, as not to allow, if not hours, at least some moments of retirement during the day, or during the calm silence of night.

In general, it is neither the length or brevity of our devotional acts which constitutes their merit. Our Saviour has prohibited long prayers, but not without exception. He himself in certain circumstances, persevered for a length of time in this holy exercise. I think, therefore, that it would be a bad sign if we never gave more than short moments to the exercises of devotion. Should we not find means to curtail something from the hours we dedicate to our pleasures, or to paying or receiving useless visits, if the value of time and devotion were better known to us? No one can dispute, that the beneficence of him who foregoes an innocent pleasure, to enable

himself to assist an unfortunate person, surpasses in liberality him who is satisfied with giving up something to the poor out of his superfluity. Would it not also be more laudable to steal an hour from our amusements, and to sanctify it by pious meditations ?

As we are not always equally disposed to elevate our thoughts to God, we are not necessarily obliged to fix certain hours for the performance of our devotions. However, as we should soon neglect to renew them, if we were absolutely without rules on this subject, it is proper at least to prescribe some to ourselves. In my opinion the opening of the day, and the silence of the night particularly invite us to this occupation. The passage from that state in which the sense of our existence is suspended, the passage from sleeping to waking, is to us a kind of resurrection ; it is very natural that after having tasted the sweets of repose, the sentiment of our returning strength, and the majestic spectacle of the sun who comes to revive all nature, should awaken in our souls the respect and love we owe to our Maker. In the same manner the termination of the day, the recollection of the favours we have received, of the dangers we have escaped, of the faults we have committed, or of the good we have done, will easily excite in a feeling heart impressions of gratitude, repentance, and trust in God ; and the continual want we have of his protection will be deeply felt, at the

approach of that state which leaves us defenceless. May we not also in the course of the day find certain moments to consecrate to devotion, if we give ourselves less up to cares and useless occupations, if we were less under the influence of fashion and vanity, and that we had the courage to despise certain rules of pretended propriety, which frequently serve only to waste time? To take a view of the state of our heart, to meditate on the great truths of Religion, would it not be a more noble mode of employing our leisure moments, than spending them in trifles, in dreams of fortune, or in listening to frivolous news?

Perhaps we do not sufficiently accustom ourselves to acquire a taste for pious exercises, and frequently it is from a want of endeavour, and not from real want of powers, that we are incapable of devotion.

Sometimes when desirous of employing ourselves in some labour of thought, we experience a kind of languor which takes from us all hope of success; we try, however, and we often find that we have never laboured more successfully. Why not make the same trial with regard to devotion; how do we know whether it will not be successful? And, after all, are we not at liberty to suspend our exercises of piety, if after having sincerely endeavoured, we feel that we have no power over our thoughts? To begin our devotions without preparation, without previous recollection, and when we are worn out by labours, and

our minds still engaged with the noisy pleasures we have just quitted, or chagrined by the bad success of an affair in which we are interested, is the way to acquit ourselves of this duty very improperly. Not to continue our act of prayer in some sort, during the course of the day, by a constant application to practise the good resolutions we have formed, is the way to make devotion a heavy and formidable burthen. He who does not listen to the holy word with a religious attention, who does not keep it in an upright and well disposed heart, must not expect that devotion will make him more pious and more wise, for his is not a true devotion, but merely a shadow. Why are the prayers of the wicked rejected by God? Because they have no serious desire to obtain the spiritual blessings they implore. How can we believe that God will bless our religious acts, whilst he sees that we do not even wish our prayers to be granted, and that we approach him reluctantly, as the slave approaches his master, with a secret wish to escape speedily from a burthenfome employment.

We are tempted to view devotion in the light of a meritorious work, when we persuade ourselves that it is agreeable to God, inasmuch as it contributes to his glory. But let us never consider it otherwise than as a duty, and a duty imposed on us by God for our own advantage; let us always remember that he is God, and that he will act as God, independently of our

prayers, though he requires our homage and adoration. Finally, if all our offerings are of no value before the Supreme Being, but inasmuch as they are accompanied with a sincere faith in the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, which alone can make us and our prayers acceptable to him, it is easy to conclude that our devotion, if not sanctified by faith in the Redeemer, is no more in the sight of the most High, than the harmonious sounds which are re-echoed in our temples; for he is not like men, who are prevailed on by vows, petitions, words, and sounds.

The efficacy of devotion does not depend either on the multitude of prayers, nor on the number of those who address them, but on a hope founded on the mercy of God, and on his promise to hear and to pardon us for the sake of Christ. This confidence must be the soul of devotion, as well as of all our Christian profession.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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